Letter - Meditations on the Tarot (TARO)

Letters I - VII

A Journey into Christian Hermeticism

translated from the French original mimeograph
by Robert A. Powell

revised by bradley d. rader

Reviser's Note

In the autumn of 1996, i first had the opportunity to see the original document that Robert A. Powell used to make the English translation of the French book "Méditations sur les 22 arcanes majeurs du Tarot", or "Meditations on the Tarot: A Journey into Christian Hermeticism". It had many intriguing non-verbal elements of expression in it such as: various types of underline, unique end of chapter designs, pauses between sentences and paragraphs, and occasional use of a printer's technique called (in German) "Sperrdruck" or s p a c e d t e x t, and very rarely a spaced text with the connected underline as i have just indicated. It made such an impression on me than i decided to try to render the English text to reincorporate all of these elements.

The following is a history of how the book came to be (in English) and is based on what i believe to reliable second-hand information. The original text probably began to be written in the form of draft notes sometime in 1958. By 1964, the first 16 to 19 chapters (of an eventual twenty-two) were complete and in a typewritten manuscript with over 600 pages. The anonymous author submitted it to a publisher of French Christian Hermetic writings named Paul Derain. the people at that company found the book interesting enough that they were prepared to publish it (upon the author's death as was his wish). Unfortunately, they wanted to rewrite the book owing to its use of "house-style" French as opposed to something more strictly formal. This reaction so displeased the author that they retrieved the manuscript and set out with a new plan, giving it then to a trusted friend Stefan Łubieński. Stefan was thereby tasked with turning the typed manuscript into mimeograph "stencils" in order to make a small number of copies to be given out to a small number of the anonymous author's hand picked friends. Stefan's assistant, Eva Cliteur, began to check the stencils for accuracy and discovered numerous mistakes. She asked for permission to compare the original typewritten work to correct by hand the mimeograph copy. i am

unclear as to whether Eva's version reached the author's small circle of friends or a different group of people.

The original typewritten book in French was completed on May 21, 1967. Just ten days later on May 31, 1967, the anonymous author wrote a very short letter to two close friends who received a copy of the stencils and were trying to make a German translation of the book. In this letter most of the emphasis is on the nature of the many quotations in the book as dealing with how central they for the book as a whole. Apparently these two friends had thought of taking all the quotes and placing them as footnotes or in an appendix at the end of the book, and the author stresses here repeatedly how important and central they are to the book, stating that the quotes were originally written "in Sperrdruck" or the aforementioned s p a c e d t e x t format. The author goes on to say that Stefan Łubieński on his own rendered the quotes in a denser single spaced format compared to the double space format of the rest of the book, further saying the author didn't wish to personally intervene with Stefan's choice because it would have been too much additional work for Stefan to retype it. Obviously, this means my handwritten version is therefore quite imperfect and needs to be reimagined as having all the quotes written in this larger, expanded format (with the possible exception of the bible verses and poetry in stanzas). i also believe that the words in Sperrdruck with the connected underline implies a sort of "expanded cursive" which i feel would look like this. Another thing to point out about the text is that there were many variant spelling of words and i chose to sometimes retain them in a more uniform format.

There are a very few places in the text where there were unusually long sentences that would make a book publisher's eyes spin and as Robert didn't retain them, i didn't have the talent to reword them more true to the original.

Robert Powell first met Eva Cliteur during the Holy Nights 1977/78 and on her third conversation said to him, "You are the one to

translate this book into English!". Over the next few years he did so and also did some necessary research into identifying Biblical quotes and some bibliographical references.

The original French typewritten manuscript was apparently burned by the author after Stefan transcribed it; the author's short note to his two friends was such a Godsend to me as there is apparently no other written extant evidence regarding the true nature of the book.

There are two places in the book that leave me with questions. The first is in Letter XVI when Swami Vivekananda is thanked for his contribution without being introduced first. (Sometimes i have the feeling there are one or two additional places missing something here or there.) The other is in Letter XXII where in the original French the wording is a bit different when the Zohar is quoted in describing the four Holy Living Creatures.

IF you don't have access to the French original manuscript - or an online scan thereof - this version is as close as you can get to the actual words in the book. Unfortunately, the current published French editions have much in them that smacks of inaccuracy.

May 21, 2024

bradley d rader

Foreword

These meditations on the Major Arcana of the Tarot are Letters addressed to the Unknown Friend. The addressee in this instance is anyone who will read all of them and who thereby acquires definite knowledge, through the experience of meditative reading, about Christian Hermeticism. He will know also that the author of these Letters has said more about himself in these Letters than he would have been able to in any other way. No matter what other source he might have, he will know the author better through the Letters themselves.

These Letters are written in French because in France – since the XVIIIth century until the present time, i.e. the second half of the XXth century – there exists a literature on the Tarot, a phenomenon which is found nowhere else. On the other hand, there existed in France – and it still persists – a continuous tradition of Hermeticism, in which is united a spirit of free research with one of respect for the tradition. The purpose of these Letters therefore will be to "incarnate" into this tradition, i.e. to become an organic part of it, and in this way to contribute support to it.

As these Letters are intended only to serve, to sustain and to support the Hermetic Tradition – from its first appearance in the epoch of Hermes Trismegistus, lost in the remoteness of antiquity and become legendary – they are a definite manifestation of this millennial-old current of thought, effort and revelation. Their aim is not only to revive the Tradition in the twentieth century but also – and above all – to immerse the reader – or rather the Unknown Friend – in this current, be it temporarily or for ever. For this reason the numerous citations of ancient and modern authors which you will find in these Letters are not due to literary considerations, nor to a display of erudition. They are evocations of the masters of the Tradition, in order that they may be present with their impulses of aspiration and their light of thought in the current of meditative thought which these Letters on the 22 Major Arcana of the Tarot represent. For these are in essence twenty-two spiritual exercises, by means of which you, dear Unknown Friend, will immerse yourself in the current of the living Tradition, and thus enter into the community of spirits who have served it and who are still serving it.

And the citations in question only serve the aim of a relief-setting for this community. For the links in the chain of the tradition are not thoughts and efforts alone; they are above all living beings who were thinking these thoughts and willing these efforts. The essence of the Tradition is not a doctrine, but rather a community of spirits from age to age.

There remains nothing more to say in this foreword to the Letter-Meditations on the Tarot,

because all other questions concerning them will find a response in the Letters themselves.

Your friend greets you, dear Unknown Friend, from beyond the grave.

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Letter I:- MEDITATION on the First Major Arcanum of the TAROT
"The Magician"
"Le Bateleur"

Spiritus ubi vult spirat: et vocem ejus audis, sed nescis unde veniat, aut quo vadat: sic est omnis, qui natus est ex spiritu.
(John iii, 8)

The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit. (John iii, 8)

"Into this happy night,
In secret, seen of none,
Nor saw I aught,
Without other light or guide,
Save that which in my heart did burn."
(St. John of the Cross, "Canciones del Alma", "The Dark Night of the Soul", verse iii; trsl. G.C. Graham, London, 1922, p. 29)

Dear Unknown Friend,

The words of the Master cited above haved served me the key for opening the door to comprehension of the first Major Arcanum of the Tarot, "The Magician", which is, in turn, the key to all the other Major Arcana. This is why I have put them as an epigraph to this Letter. And then I have cited a verse from the "Songs of the Soul" of St. John of the Cross, because it has the virtue of awakening the deeper layers of the soul, which one has to appeal to when the concern is the first Arcanum of the Tarot and, consequently, all the Major Arcana of the Tarot. For the Major Arcana of the Tarot are authentic symbols, i.e. they are "magic, mental, psychic and moral operations" awakening new notions, ideas, sentiments and aspirations, which means to say that they require an activity more profound than that of study and intellectual explanation. It is therefore in a state of deep contemplation — and always ever deeper — that they should be approached. And it is the deep and intimate layers of the soul which become active and bear fruit when one meditates on the Arcana of the Tarot. Therefore this "night", of which St. John of the Cross speaks, is necessary, where one withdraws oneself "in secret" and into which one has to immerse oneself each time that one meditates on the Arcana of the Tarot. It is a work to be accomplished in solitude, and is all the more suitable for recluses.

The Major Arcana of the Tarot are neither allegories nor secrets, because allegories are, in fact, only figurative representations of abstract notions, and secrets are only facts, procedures,

practices, or whatever doctrines that one keeps to oneself for a personal motive, since they are able to be understood and put into practice by others to whom one does not want to reveal them. The Major Arcana of the Tarot are authentic symbols. They conceal and reveal their sense at one and the same time according to the depth of meditation. That which they reveal are not secrets, i.e. things hidden by human will, but are arcana, which is something quite different. An arcanum is that which it is necessary to "k n o w" in order to be fruitful in a given domain of spiritual life. It is that which must be actively present in our consciousness — or even in our subconscious — in order to render us capable of making discoveries, engendering new ideas, conceiving of new artistic subjects. In a word, it makes us fertile in our creative pursuits, in whatever domain of spiritual life. An arcanum is a "ferment" or an "enzyme" whose presence stimulates the spiritual and the psychic life of man. And it is symbols which are the bearers of these "ferments" or "enzymes" and which communicate them — if the mentality and morality of the recipient is ready, i.e. if he is "poor in spirit" and does not suffer from the most serious spiritual malady: - self-complacency.

Just as the arcanum is superior to the secret, so is the mystery superior to the arcanum. The mystery is more than a stimulating "ferment". It is a spiritual event comparable to physical birth or death. It is a change of the entire spiritual and psychic motivation, or a complete change of the plane of consciousness. The seven sacraments of the Church are the prismatic colors of the white light of one sole Mystery or Sacrament, known as that of the second birth, which the Master pointed out to Nicodemus in the nocturnal initiation conversation which He had with him. It is this which Christian Hermeticism understands by "the Great Initiation".

It goes without saying that nobody initiates anyone else, if we understand by "initiation" the Mystery of the second birth or the Great Sacrament. This Initiation is operative from above and has the value and the duration of eternity. The Initiator is above, and here below one meets only the fellow pupils (con-disciples); and they recognize each other by the fact that they love one another. There are no longer any more Masters because there is only one sole M a s t e r, who is the Initiator above. To be sure, there are always masters who teach their doctrines and also initiates who communicate some of the secrets which they possess to others who thus become in their turn the "initiates" -- but all this has nothing to do with the Mystery of the Great Initiation.

For this reason Christian Hermeticism, in so far as it is a human concern, initiates no one. Amongst Christian Hermeticists nobody assumes for himself the title and the function of Initiator or Master. For all are fellow pupils and each is master of each in some respect — just as each is a pupil of each in some other respect. We cannot do better than to follow the example of St. Anthony the Great, who "subjected himself in all sincerity to the pious men whom he visited and made it his endeavor to learn for his own benefit just how each was superior to him in zeal and ascetic practice. He observed the graciousness of one, the earnestness at prayer in another; studied the even temper of one and the kindheartedness of another; fixed his attention on the vigils kept by one and on the studies pursued by another; admired one for his patient endurance, another for his fasting and

sleeping on the ground; watched closely this man's meekness and the forbearance shown by another; and in one and all alike he marked especially devotion to Christ and the love they had for one another. Having thus taken his fill, he would return to his own place of asceticism. Then he assimilated in himself what he had obtained from each and devoted all his energies to realizing in himself the virtues of all..." - (St. Athanasius, "The Life of St. Anthony", ch.4; trsl. R.T. Meyer, Westminster, 1950, p.21).

It is the same conduct which must be applied by the Christian Hermeticist in that which concerns knowledge and science — natural, historical, philological, philosophical, theological, symbolical and traditional. It amounts to learning the art of l e a r n i n g.

Now, it is the Arcana which stimulate us and at the same time guide us in the art of learning. In this sense, the Major Arcana of the Tarot are a complete, entire, invaluable school of meditation, study and spiritual effort — a masterly school in the a r t of l e a r n i n g.

Dear Unknown Friend, Christian Hermeticism therefore has no pretension to rival either religion or official science. He who is searching here for the "true religion", the "true philosophy", or the "true science" is looking in the wrong direction. Christian Hermeticists are not masters, but servants. They do not have the pretension (that is, in any case, somewhat puerile) of elevating themselves above the holy faith of the faithful, or above the fruits of the admirable efforts of workers in science, or above the creations of artistic genius. Hermeticists are not guarding the secret of future discoveries in the sciences. They do not know, for example, just as everyone at present is ignorant of it, the effective remedy against cancer. Moreover they would be monsters if they were to guard the secret of the remedy against this bane of humanity without communicating it. No, they do not know it, and they will be the first to recognize the superiority of the future benefactor of the human race, that savant who will discover this remedy.

Likewise they recognize without reserve the superiority of a Francis of Assisi -- and of many others — who was a man of the so-called "exoteric" faith. They know also that each sincere believer is potentially a Francis of Assisi... Men and women of faith, of science and of art are their superiors in many essential points. Hermeticists know it well and do not flatter themselves to be better, to believe better, to know better or to be more competent. They do not secretly guard a religion, which to them is more appropriate, to replace existing religions, or a science to replace the current sciences, or arts to replace the fine arts of today or yesterday. That which they possess does not comprise any tangible advantage or objective superiority with regard to religion, science and art; what they possess is only the <u>communal soul of religion, science and art</u>. What is this mission of conserving the communal soul of religion, science and art? I am going to reply with a concrete example, as follows :--

You know without doubt, dear Unknown Friend, that many — and several of them are writers - in France, Germany, England, and elsewhere, promulgate the doctrine of the so-called "two churches": the church of Peter and the church of John, or of "two epochs" — the epoch of Peter and the epoch of John. You know also that this doctrine

teaches the end — more or less at hand — of the church of Peter, or above all of the papacy which is its visible symbol, and that the spirit of John, the disciple loved by the Master, he who leaned on his breast and heard the beating of his heart, will replace it. In this way it teaches that the "exoteric" church of Peter will make way for the "esoteric" church of John, which will be that of perfect freedom.

Now, John, who submitted himself voluntarily to Peter as leader or prince of the apostles, did not become his successor after his death, although he outlived Peter by many years. The beloved disciple who listened to the beating of the Master's heart was, is, and always will be the representative and guardian of this heart — and as such he was not, is not, and never will be the <u>leader</u> or <u>head</u> of the Church. Because just as the heart is not called upon to replace the head, so is John not called upon to succeed Peter. The heart certainly guards the life of the body and the soul, but it is the head which makes decisions, directs and chooses the means for the accomplishment of the tasks of the entire organism — head, heart and limbs. The mission of John is to keep <u>the life and soul</u> of the Church <u>alive</u> until the Second Coming of the Lord. This is why John has never claimed and never will claim the office of directing the body of the Church. He <u>vivifies</u> this body, but he does not direct its actions.

Now Hermeticism, the living Hermetic tradition, guards the communal soul of all true culture. I must add: - <u>Hermeticists listen to</u> — and now and then hear — <u>the beating of the heart of the spiritual life of humanity</u>. They cannot do otherwise than live as guardians of the life and communal soul of religion, science and art. They do not have any privilege in any of these domains; saints, true scientists, and artists of genius are their superiors. But they live for the mystery of the communal heart which beats within all religions, all philosophies, all arts and all sciences — past, present and future. And inspired by the example of John, the beloved disciple, they do not pretend, and never will pretend, to play a directing role in religion, science, art, in social or political life; but they are constantly attentive so as not to miss any occasion to <u>serve</u> religion, philosophy, science, art, the social and political life of humanity, and to this to infuse the breath of life of their communal soul — analogous to the administration of the sacrament of Holy Communion. Hermeticism is — and is only — a stimulant, a "ferment" or an "enzyme" in the organism of the spiritual life of humanity. In this sense it is itself an <u>Arcanum</u> — that is to say the antecedent of the Mystery of the second birth or the Great Initiation.

This is the spirit of Hermeticism. And it is in this spirit that we now return to the first Major Arcanum of the Tarot.

Of what does this first Card consist?

A young man, wearing a large hat in the form of a lemniscate, standing behind a small table on which are arranged: a yellow-painted vase; three small yellow discs; another four red discs, in two piles, each divided down the middle by a line; a red beaker with two dice; a knife withdrawn from its sheath; and lastly a yellow bag for carrying these various objects. The young man — who is the M a g i c i a n — holds a rod in his right hand (from the

standpoint of the observer) and a ball or yellow object in his left hand. He holds these two objects with perfect ease, without clasping them or showing any other sign of tension, encumbrance, haste or effort. What he does with his hands is with perfect spontaneity – it is easy play and not work. He himself does not follow the movement of his hands; his gaze is elsewhere.

Such is this Card.

That the series of symbols, that is to say of the revealers of the arcana, which is the game of Tarot, is opened by an image representing a player of tricks – a magician (or juggler) who plays – is truly astonishing! How may this be explained?

The first Arcanum – the principle underlying all the other 21 Major Arcana of the Tarot – is that of the rapport of personal effort and of spiritual reality. It occupies the first place in the series because if one does not understand it (i.e. take hold of it in cognitive and actual practice), one would not know what to do with all the other arcana. For it is "The Magician" who is called to reveal the practical method relating to all the arcana. He is the "Arcanum of the Arcana", in the sense that he reveals that which it is necessary to know and to will in order to enter the school of spiritual exercises whose totality comprises the game of Tarot, in order to be able to derive some benefit therefrom.

In fact, the first and fundamental principle of esotericism (i.e. of the way of experience of the reality of the Spirit) can be rendered by the formula:

> Learn at first concentration without effort; transform work into play; make every yoke that you have accepted easy and every burden that you carry light!

This counsel, or command, or even warning, however you wish to take it, is most serious; this is attested by its original source, namely the words of the Master Himself :- "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew xi, 30).

Let us examine in succession the three parts of this formula, in order to penetrate the Arcanum of "active relaxation" or "effort without effort".

Firstly – "learn at first concentration without effort". – What is this in a practical and theoretical sense?

Concentration, as the faculty of fixing maximum attention on a minimum amount of space (Schiller said that he who wants to complete something of worth and of skill, "der sammle still und unerschlafft, die kleinsten Punkt die grösste Kraft", i.e. that "quietly and unceasingly he directs the greatest force upon the smallest point"), is the practical key to all success in every domain. Modern pedagogy and psychotherapy, the schools of prayer and spiritual exercises – Franciscan, Carmelite, Dominican and Jesuit – occult schools of every type and, lastly, ancient Hindu Yoga, all approaches are in agreement about this. Patanjali, in his classic work on Yoga, formulates in his first sentence the practical and theoretical essence of Yoga – the "first arcanum" or the key of Yoga – as follows :- "Yoga citta vritti nirodha" – "Yoga is the suppression of the oscillations of the mental substance" (Yoga Sutras 1.2) – or, in other terms, the art of concentration. For the "oscillations" (vritti) of the "mental substance" (citta) take

place automatically. This automatism in the movements of thought and imagination is the opposite of concentration. Now, concentration is only possible in a condition of c a l m and s i l e n c e, at the expense of the automatism of thought and imagination.

The "to be s i l e n t" therefore precedes the "to k n o w", the "to w i l l" and the "to d a r e". This is why the Pythagorean school prescribed five years silence to beginners or "hearers". One dared to speak there only when one k n e w and w a s a b l e t o, after having mastered the art of being silent – that is to say, the art of concentration. The prerogative "to speak" belonged to those who no longer spoke automatically, driven by the game of the intellect and imagination, but who were able to suppress it owing to the practice of interior and exterior silence, and who knew what they were saying – again thanks to the same practice. The "s i l e n t i u m" practiced by Trappist monks and prescribed for the time of "retreat", generally to all those there who are taking part, is only the application of the same true law: "Yoga is the suppression of the oscillations of the mental substance" or "concentration is the willed silence of the automatism of the intellect and imagination". –

There are nevertheless two sorts of concentration to be distinguished, which are essentially different. The one is disinterested concentration and the other is interested concentration. The first is due to the will free of enslaving passions, obsessions and attachments, whereas the other is the result of a dominating passion, obsession or attachment. A monk absorbed in prayer and an enraged bull are, the one and the other, concentrated. But the one is in the peace of contemplation whilst the other is carried away by rage. Strong passions therefore realize themselves as a high degree of concentration. Thus, gluttons, misers, arrogant people and maniacs occasionally achieve a remarkable concentration. But, truth to tell, it is not a matter of concentration but rather obsession in connection with such people.

True concentration is a free act in light and in peace. It presupposes a disinterested and detached will. For it is the condition of the will which is the determining and decisive factor in concentration. This is why Yoga, for example, demands the practice of Yama and Niyama (yama – the five rules of moral conduct; niyama – the five rules of mortification) before the preparation of the body (through respiration and posture) for concentration and the practice of the three degrees of concentration itself (dharana, dyana, samadhi – concentration, meditation, and contemplation).

Both St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila do not tire of repeating that the concentration necessary for spiritual prayer is the fruit of moral purification of the will.

It is therefore useless to strive to concentrate oneself if the will is infatuated with something else. The "oscillations of the mental substance" will never be able to be reduced to silence if the will itself does not infuse them with its silence. It is the silenced will which effects the silence of thought and imagination in concentration.

This is why the great ascetics are also the great masters of concentration.

All this is obvious and stands to reason. However, what occupies us here is not just concentration in general but particularly and especially concentration without effort. What is this?

Look at a tightrope walker. He is evidently completely concentrated, because if he were not, he would fall to the ground. His life is at stake, and it is only perfect concentration which can save him.

Yet do you believe that his thought and his imagination are occupied with what he is doing? Do you think that he reflects and that he imagines, that he calculates and that he makes plans with regard to each step that he makes on the rope?

If he were to do that, he would fall immediately. He has to eliminate all activity of the intellect and of the imagination in order to avoid a fall. He must have suppressed the "oscillations of the mental substance" in order to be able to exercise his skill. It is the intelligence of his rhythmic system — the respiratory and circulatory system — which replaces that of his brain during his acrobatic exercises. In the last analysis, it is a matter of a miracle — analogous to that of St. Dionysius, apostle of the Gauls and first bishop of Paris, whom tradition identifies with St. Dionysius the Areopagite, the disciple of St. Paul. In particular, he was "beheaded with the sword before the statue of Mercury, confessing his faith in the Holy Trinity. And at once the body of Dionysius stood erect, and took his head in its hands; and with an Angel guiding it and a great light going before, it walked for two miles, from the place called Montmartre to the place where, by its own choice and by the providence of God, it now reposes." (Jacobus de Voragine, "Legenda aurea"; trsl. G. Ryan and H. Ripperger, "The Golden Legend", New York, 1948, pp. 620-621). Now, the tightrope walker, he too has the "head" — that is to say, the intellect and the imagination — severed for the time of the exercise of his skill, and he also walks from one point to another, carrying his head in his hands, under the guidance of another intelligence than that of his head, which acts through the body's rhythmic system.

For the tightrope walker, the juggler, and the magician, their skill and ability are, fundamentally, analogous to the miracle of St. Dionysius; because with them as with St. Dionysius, it is a matter of transposing the center of directing consciousness from the head to the chest — from the cerebral system to the rhythmic system.

Now, concentration without effort is the transposition of the directing center of the brain to the rhythmic system — from the domain of the mind and imagination to that of morality and the will. The great hat in the form of a lemniscate which the Magician wears, like his attitude of perfect ease, indicates this transposition. For the lemniscate (the horizontal eight: ∞) is not only the symbol of infinity, but also that of rhythm, of the respiration and circulation — it is the symbol of eternal

rhythm or the eternity of rhythm.

The Magician therefore represents the state of concentration without effort, i.e. the state of consciousness where the center directing the will has "descended" (in reality it is "elevated") from the brain to the rhythmic system, where the "oscillations of the mental substance" are reduced to silence and to rest, no longer hindering concentration.

Concentration without effort – that is to say where there is nothing to suppress and where contemplation becomes as natural as breathing and the beating of the heart – is the state of consciousness (i.e. thought, imagination, feeling and will) of perfect calm, accompanied by the complete relaxation of the nerves and the muscles of the body. It is the profound silence of desires, of preoccupations, of the imagination, of the memory and of discursive thought. One may say that the entire being becomes like the surface of calm water, reflecting the immense presence of the starry sky and its indescribable harmony. And the waters are deep, they are so deep! – And the silence grows, ever increasing, what s i l e n c e ! Its growth takes place through regular waves which pass, one after the other, through your being: one wave of silence followed by another wave of more profound silence, then again a wave of still more profound silence... Have you ever drunk silence? If in the affirmative, you know what concentration without effort is.

To begin with, there are moments, subsequently minutes, then "quarters of an hour" for which complete silence or "concentration without effort" lasts. With time, the silence or concentration without effort becomes a fundamental element always present in the life of the soul. It is like the perpetual service at the church of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre which takes place, while in Paris one works, one trades, one amuses oneself, one sleeps, one dies... It is in like manner that a "perpetual service" of silence is established in the soul, which continues all the same when one is active, when one works, or when one converses.

This "zone of silence" being once established, you can draw from it both for rest and for work. Then you will have not only concentration without effort, but also activity without effort. And this is precisely what comes to expression in the second part of our formula:

t r a n s f o r m w o r k i n t o p l a y

The changing of work, which is duty, into p l a y, is effected as a consequence of the presence of the "zone of perpetual silence", where one draws from a sort of secret and intimate respiration – whose sweetness and freshness accomplish the anointing of work and transforms it into p l a y.

For the "zone of silence" does not only signify that the soul is, fundamentally, at rest, but also, and rather, that there is contact with the heavenly or spiritual world, which works together with the soul. He who finds silence in the solitude of concentration without effort, is never alone. He never bears alone the weights that he has to carry; the forces of heaven, the forces from on high, are there taking part from now on.

In this way the truth stated by the third part of the formula: make every

yoke that you have accepted easy and every burden that you carry light – itself becomes e x p e r i e n c e. For silence is the sign of real contact with the spiritual world and this contact, in turn, always engenders the influx of forces. This is the foundation of all mysticism, all gnosis, all magic and all practical esotericism in general.

All practical esotericism is founded on the following rule:-

It is necessary to be o n e in oneself (concentration without effort) and o n e with the spiritual world (to have a zone of silence in the soul) in order for a revelatory or actual spiritual experience to be able to take place.

In other words – if one wants to practice some form of authentic esotericism – be it mysticism, gnosis, or magic – it is necessary to be the "Magician", i.e. concentrated without effort, operating with ease as if one were playing, and acting with perfect calm.

This, then, is the practical teaching of the first Arcanum of the Tarot. It is the first counsel, commandment or warning concerning all spiritual practice; it is the a l e p h of the "alphabet" of practical rules of esotericism. And just as all numbers are only aspects (multiples) of unity, so are all other practical rules communicated by the other Arcana of the Tarot only aspects and modalities of this basic rule.

Such is the practical teaching of the "Magician".

What is its theoretical teaching?

It corresponds in every point to the practical teaching, its theoretical operation being only the mental aspect of the practice. Just as the latter proceeds from concentration without effort, i.e. puts unity into practice, so does the attendant theory consist in the basic unity of the natural world, the human world and the divine world. The tenet of the basic oneness of the world plays the same fundamental role for all theory as that of concentration for all practice. As concentration is the basis of every practical achievement, the tenet of the basic unity of the world is the same with regard to all knowledge – without it no knowledge is conceivable.

The tenet of the essential unity of all that exists precedes every act of knowledge, and every act of knowledge presupposes the tenet of the unity of the world. The ideal – or ultimate aim – of all philosophy and all science is T R U T H. But "truth" has no other meaning than that of the reduction of the plurality of phenomena to an essential unity – of facts to laws, of laws to principles, of principles to essence or being. All search for truth – mystical, gnostic, philosophical and scientific – p o s t u l a t e s its existence, i.e. the fundamental unity of the multiplicity of phenomena in the world. Without this unity nothing would be knowable. How could one proceed from the known to the unknown – and this is indeed the method of progress in knowledge – if the unknown had nothing to do with the known? If the unknown had no relationship with the known and was absolutely and essentially a stranger to it? When we say that the world is knowable – i.e. that knowledge as such exists – we state through this fact itself the tenet of the essential unity of the world or its knowability. We declare that the world is not a mosaic, where a plurality of worlds which are essentially strangers to one another are fitted together, but

that it is an organism – all of whose parts are governed by the same principle, revealing it and allowing reduction to it. The relationship of everything and of all beings is the "conditio sine qua non" of their knowability.

The open recognition of the relationship of all things and beings has engendered an exactly corresponding method of knowledge. It is the method generally known under the title "THE METHOD OF ANALOGY"; its role and its import in so-called "occult" science has been illumined in an admirable way by P a p u s in his "Traité élémentaire de science occulte" (Paris, 1888 pp. 28ff.). Analogy is not a tenet or postulate – the essential unity of the world is this –, but is the first and principal method (the aleph of the alphabet of methods) whose use facilitates the advance of knowledge. It is the first conclusion drawn from the tenet of universal unity. Since at the root of the diversity of phenomena their unity is found, in such a way that they are at one and the same time different and one, they are neither identical nor heterogeneous but are analogous in so far as they manifest their essential kinship.

The traditional formula setting forth the method of analogy is well known. It is the second verse of the EMERALD TABLE (T a b u l a S m a r a g d i n a) of Hermes Trismegistus:

> "Quod superius est sicut quod inferius, et quod inferius est sicut quod est superius, ad perpetranda miracula Rei Unius" :- "That which is above is like to that which is below and that which is below is like to that which is above, to accomplish the miracles of (the) one thing (or the miracles of Unity)". (Tabula Smaragdina, 2; trsl. R. Steele and D.W. Singer, "Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine" xxi, 1928, p. 42; see the Appendix to this Letter concerning the problem of the authenticity of the Tabula Smaragdina).

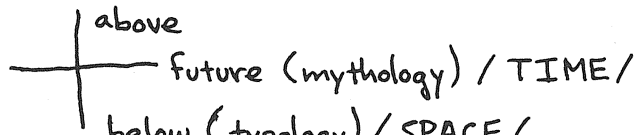
This is the classic formula of analogy for all that exists in space, above and below; the formula of analogy applied in time would be:-

> "Quod fuit est sicut quod erit, et quod erit est sicut quod fuit, ad perpentranda miracula aeternitatis." :- "That which was is as that which will be, and that which will be is as that which was, to accomplish the miracles of Eternity."

The formula of analogy applied in space is the basis of typological symbolism, that is, of symbols expressing correspondences between prototypes above and their manifestations below; the formula of analogy applied in time is the basis of mythological symbolism, that is, of symbols expressing correspondences between archetypes in the past and their manifestations in the present. Thus the Magician is a typological symbol; he reveals to us the prototype of the MAN OF SPIRIT. While the Biblical accounts of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and if you wish, also, the "Schisme d'Irschou" of Saint-Yves d'Alveydre (cf. "Mission des Juifs", vol. ii, Paris, 1956, pp. 191ff.) are, on the other hand, myths; they reveal the archetypes which manifest themselves endlessly in history and in each individual biography – they are mythological symbols pertaining to the domain of time.

These two categories of symbolism, based on analogy, constitute through their

mutual relationship a c r o s s :-



Here is something written on myth (i.e. on the symbolism of time, or history, according to our definition) by Hans Leisegang, the author of a classic book on G n o s i s : "Every myth expresses, in a form narrated for a particular case, an eternal idea, which will be intuitively recognized by he who re-experiences the content of the myth." (Hans Leisegang, "Die Gnosis", Leipzig, 1924, p.51)

And this is what Marc Haven says concerning typological symbols in the chapter on symbolism in his posthumous book "Le Tarot" (1937) :-

> "Our sensations, symbolizing external movement, do not resemble them (i.e. the phenomena) any more than the undulations of sand in the desert resemble the wind which raises it up into sand dunes, or any more than the ebb and flow of the sea resembles the combined movements of the sun and moon. They are symbols of it... The opinion of Kant, Hamilton and Spencer, which reduces inner movements to simple symbols of a hidden reality is truer and more rational (than naive realism — author's note). Science ought to resign itself to being only a symbolism conscious of itself.... But the symbolic has quite another significance: the "science of sciences" as it was called by the ancients (cf. Decourcelle, "Traité des symboles", Paris, 1806), the universal and divine language, which proclaims and proves the hierarchy of forms from the archetypal world down to the material world and the relationships which unite them; it is, in a word, the living and tangible proof of the kinship of beings." (Marc Haven, "Le Tarot", Lyons, 1937, pp. 19-20, 24)

Above, therefore, two definitions — of symbols of time or of myths, and of that of space or of the correspondence of worlds "from the archetypal world down to the material world" — are formulated, the one by a German savant (Hans Leisegang) at Leipzig in 1924 and the other by a French Hermeticist (Marc Haven) at Lyons in 1906, which express exactly the ideas of the two types of symbolism (mythological and typological) which we are setting forward here.

The "Emerald Table" only alludes to typological symbolism or space — analogy between that which is "above" and that which is "below". This is why it is necessary to add to it, by extension, the corresponding formula pertaining to mythological symbolism or time, which we find, for example, in the book of Genesis of Moses.

The distinction of these two forms of symbolism is not entirely devoid of practical import; it is owing to their confusion that many errors of interpretation of ancient sources, including the Bible, must be attributed. Thus, for example, certain authors take the Biblical account of Cain and Abel as a typological symbol. They want to see in it symbols of "centrifugal and centripetal forces" etc. However, the story of Cain and

Abel is a m y t h, i.e. it expresses, in a form narrated for a particular case, an "eternal" idea. Consequently, it refers to time, to history, and not to space and its structure. It shows us how brothers can become mortal enemies through the very fact that they worship the same God in the same way. The source of religious wars is revealed here; and it is not the difference in dogma nor that of cult or ritual which is the cause, but uniquely the pretention to equality or, if one prefers, the negation of hierarchy. Here also is the world's first revolution — the archetype (Goethe's "Urphänomen") of all revolutions which have taken place and which will take place in the future of humanity. For the cause of all wars and revolutions — in a word, of all violence — is always the same: the negation of hierarchy. This cause is found already, germinally, at such a lofty level as that of the communal act of worship of the same God by two brothers — this is the staggering revelation of the story of Cain and Abel. And as murders, wars and revolutions continue, the story of Cain and Abel remains ever valid and relevant. Being always valid and relevant throughout the passage of centuries, this is a m y t h and, moreover, a myth of the first order.

It is the same with the accounts of the Fall of Adam and Eve, the Deluge and Noah's ark, the Tower of Babel, etc. These are myths, i.e. in the first place historical symbols referring to time, and not symbols expressing the unity of the worlds in physical, metaphysical and moral space. The Fall of Adam and Eve does not reveal a corresponding fall in the divine world, within the womb of the Holy Trinity. Neither does it express directly the metaphysical structure of the archetypal world. It is a particular event in the terrestrial history of mankind whose importance will cease only with the end of human history; in a word it is a true myth.

On the other hand it would be erroneous to interpret, for example, the vision of Ezekiel, the Merkabah, as a myth. The vision of the celestial Chariot is a symbolic revelation of the archetypal world. It is a typological symbol — it is that which furthermore, the author of the ZOHAR so well understood, which is why he took the vision of Ezekiel as the central symbol of cosmic knowledge — according to the rule of analogy that that which is above is as that which is below.

For the Zohar knows this rule well. Not only does it make implicit use of it, but also it gives it an explicit expression. It is thus that we read in the ZOHAR :-- "For as it is above so it is below: as all the supernal "days" are filled with blessing by the (heavenly) Man, so are the days here below filled with blessing through the agency of Man (i.e. the righteous)." ("Waera", Zohar 25a)

India also has her version of the Hermetic maxim. Thus the VISHVASARA TANTRA states the formula :- "What is here is there. What is not here is nowhere." (Vishvasara Tantra; trsl. Arthur Avalon, "The Serpent Power", London, 1919, p. 72)

The use of analogy is not limited, however, to the "accursed sciences" — magic, astrology and alchemy — and to speculative mysticism. It is, truth to tell, universal. For

neither philosophy, nor theology, nor science itself can do without it.

Here is the role that analogy plays in the logic which is the basis of philosophy and the sciences:-

1) The procedure of classification of objects on the basis of their resemblance is the first step on the way of research by the inductive method. It presupposes the analogy of objects to be classified.

2) Analogy (argument by analogy) can constitute the basis of hypotheses. Thus the famous "nebular hypothesis" of Laplace was due to the analogy that he observed in the direction of the circular movement of the planets around the sun, the movement of satellites around the planets, and the rotation of the planets about their axes. He concluded therefore, from the analogy manifesting itself in these movements, their common origin.

3) As J. Maynard KEYNES says in his "A Treatise on Probability":- "Scientific method, indeed, is mainly devoted to discovering means of so heightening the known analogy that we may dispense as far as possible with the methods of pure induction."-- (J. Maynard Keynes, "A Treatise on Probability", London, 1921, p. 241)

Now, "pure induction" is founded on simple enumeration and is essentially only conclusion based on the experience of given statistics. Thus one could say: As John is a man and is dead, and as Peter is a man and is dead, and as Michael is a man and is dead, therefore man is mortal.-- The force of this argument depends on number or on the quantity of facts known through experience. The method of analogy, on the other hand, adds the qualitative element, i.e. that which is of intrinsic importance, to the quantitative. Here is an example of an argument by analogy:- "Andrew is formed from matter, energy and consciousness. As matter does not disappear with his death, but only changes its form, and as energy does not disappear but only modifies the mode of its activity, Andrew's consciousness, also, cannot simply disappear, but must merely change its form and mode (or plane) of activity. Therefore Andrew is i m m o r t a l."

This latter argument is founded on the formula of Hermes Trismegistus: that which is below (matter)(energy) is as that which is above (consciousness). Now, if there exists a law of conservation of matter and energy (although matter transforms itself into energy and vice versa), there must necessarily exist a law of conservation of consciousness, or immortality.

The ideal of science, according to Keynes, is to find the means to elaborate the scope of known analogy so far as to be able to do without the hypothetical method of pure induction, i.e. to transform the scientific method into pure analogy, based on pure experience, without the hypothetical elements immanent in pure induction. Now, it is by virtue of the method of analogy that science makes discoveries (in passing from the known to the unknown), formulates fruitful hypotheses, and pursues a methodical, directing aim. Analogy is its beginning and its end, its alpha and its omega.

In that which concerns speculative philosophy or metaphysics, the same role is

reserved there for analogy. All conclusions of a metaphysical nature are based only on the analogy of man, Nature and the intelligible or metaphysical world. Thus the two principal authorities of the most methodical and most disciplined philosophy — medieval Scholastic philosophy — St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventura (of whom one represents Aristotelianism and the other Platonism in Christian philosophy) not only make use of analogy but also assign it a very important theoretical role in their doctrines themselves. St. Thomas advances the doctrine of "analogia entis", the analogy of being, which is the principal key to his philosophy. St. Bonaventura, in his doctrine of "signatura rerum", interprets the entire visible world as the symbol of the invisible world. For him, the visible world is only another Holy Scripture, another revelation alongside that which is contained in the Holy Scripture properly said:

> "Et sic patet quod totus mundus est sicut unum speculum plenum luminibus praesentantibus divinam sapientiam, et sicut carbo effundens lucem." - "And thus it appears that the entire world is like a single mirror full of lights presenting the divine wisdom, or as charcoal emitting light." (Bonaventura, "Collationes in Hexaemeron ii, 27)

Now, St. Thomas and St. Bonaventura have been proclaimed (by Sixtus V in 1588, and again in 1879 by Leo XIII) "duae olivae et duo candelabra in domo Dei lucentia" - "two olive trees and two chandeliers shining in the house of God".

You see therefore, dear Unknown Friend, that we are able, you and I, to declare openly our faith in analogy and proclaim aloud the formula of the "Emerald Table", consecrated by tradition, without appearing thereby to be infidels to philosophy, science, and the official doctrines of the Church. We are able to use it in good conscience as philosophers, as scientists and as Catholics. There is nothing to be said against it according to these three points of view.

But the sanction accorded to analogy does not stop here: the Master Himself has endorsed it by the use which He made of it. As well as the parables, the "a fortiori" argument which He made use of in His sayings demonstrates it. The parables, which are "ad hoc" symbols, would be devoid of sense and purpose, if they were not statements of analogous truths made in the language of analogy and making appeal to the sense of analogy.

With respect to the argument "a fortiori", its entire strength lies in analogy which is its foundation. Here is an example of an "a fortiori" argument employed by the Master:

> "What man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, <u>how much more</u> will your Father who is

in heaven give good things to those who ask him." (Matthew vii, 9-11)
Here we have the analogy of terrestrial kinship (human) to celestial kinship (divine), on which is founded the force of the "a fortiori" argument, where "how much more" is the result of imperfect manifestation in relation to the ideal prototype. The analogy of father and Father is the essence here.

At this point, a feeling of unease could arise in the conscientious reader: "There are many arguments and authorities cited in support of the method of analogy, but what is there here as an argument against this method, as regarding its weaknesses and dangers?

Well, it must be acknowledged quite plainly and frankly that the method of analogy presents many negative sides and many dangers, errors and serious illusions. This is because it is entirely founded on experience; and all superficial, incomplete or false experience is bound to give rise to superficial, incomplete or false conclusions, by analogy, in a direction parallel with the experience from which they are the outcome. Thus in making use of insufficiently powerful telescopes "canals" were seen on Mars — straight, continuous lines — where it was inferred by analogy that these "canals" must be artificial and that consequently the planet was inhabited by civilized beings. Now, the subsequent perfecting of telescopes and exact observation has demonstrated that the "canals" are not at all continuous, but that they display breaks, and are not rectilinear as they first appeared. The argument by analogy therefore loses its value in this case, owing to the error of experience on which it was based.

With respect to the occult sciences, Gerard van Rijnberk has published (cf. "Le Tarot", Lyons, 1947, p.203) a table of astrological "correspondences" of the Tarot according to different authors. There, for example, the seventh card - "The Chariot" — corresponds to the sign Gemini (according to Etteila), to Sagittarius (according to Fomalhaut), to Gemini (according to Shoral), to Sagittarius (according to an anonymous author), to the planet Mars (according to Basilide), to the planet Venus (according to Volguine), to the Sun (according to Ely Star), to the sign of Libra (according to Snijders), to the planet Venus (according to Muchery), to the sign of Cancer (according to Crowley), and to the sign of Gemini (according to Kurtzahn).

Here the relativity of the correspondences obtained by means of the method of analogy is readily apparent.

But, on the other hand, the concordance of correspondences between the metals and the planets, obtained by the same method, is maintained by ancient, medieval and modern authors. Greek astrologers of the 4th century B.C., continuing the Babylonian tradition, where gold corresponds to the Sun and to the god Enlil, and silver to the Moon and to the god Anu, accepted the following correspondences: Gold-Sun, Silver-Moon, Lead-Saturn, Tin-Jupiter, Iron-Mars, Copper-Venus, and

Mercury – Mercury (cf. E. J. HOLMYARD, "Alchemy", London, 1957, pp. 18-19).* The same correspondences were accepted by astrologers and alchemists of the Middle Ages, and again today by all authors in the occult sciences and in Hermeticism (including Rudolf Steiner and other anthroposophical authors), which correspondences you will find in the book by PAPUS, "Traité Élémentaire de Science Occulte" (Paris, 1888 p. 145).

On the subject of the universality of these analogous correspondences between the planets and metals, I may add that the 44 years of my studies and experiences in this domain have not led me to modify anything in the table of given correspondences and that, on the contrary, they have supplied numerous proofs — direct and indirect — which have confirmed their truth.

It must be concluded, therefore, that the method of analogy on the one hand is in no way infallible but on the other hand it is qualified to lead to the discovery of essential truths. Its effectiveness and value depend on the fullness and exactitude of the experience upon which it is based.

Let us return now to the Arcanum "THE MAGICIAN".

As concentration without effort finds expression in the whole picture of the Card – as well as in all its details – and thus constitutes the practical Arcanum here, one also finds expressed in it the method of analogy, which constitutes the theoretical Arcanum. For, seen from the level of the intellect, the practice of the method of analogy corresponds completely to the practice of concentration without effort. Also, it appears there not as "work" but rather as "p l a y".

The practice of analogy on the intellectual plane of consciousness does not, in fact, demand any effort; either one perceives ("sees") analogous correspondences or one

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* Translator's note: E. J. Holmyard's research concerning the planetary metals, cited here by the author, stands in need of some modification. The list of correspondences between the planets and the metals given by Holmyard is the standard one found in Arabic alchemical texts. It is also referred to by the Christian astrologer Theophilus of Edessa, who lived in Baghdad in the eighth century A.D. (cf. Arthur Ludwich, "Anecdota astrologica", Leipzig, 1877, p. 121). This list is almost identical to the earliest known list of the planetary metals, that of the second century A.D. Greek astrologer Vettius Valens (cf. "Anthologiarum" i, 1; ed. W. Kroll, Berlin, 1908), with the exception that Valens gives electrum (an alloy of gold and silver) as the metal corresponding to Mercury, instead of quicksilver. It is possible that the Arabic alchemical tradition took over the correspondences between the planets and metals from the Greek astrological tradition, and later substituted quicksilver for electrum. (It is not surprising that quicksilver is not mentioned by Vettius Valens, as its distillation became established only later – at some time around the fourth century A.D.).

does not perceive or "see" them.

Just as the magician or juggler has had to train and work for a long time before attaining the ability of concentration without effort, similarly he who makes use of the method of analogy on the intellectual plane must have worked much — i.e. to have acquired long experience and to have accumulated the teachings which it requires — before attaining the faculty of immediate perception of analogous correspondences, before becoming a "magician" or "juggler" who makes use of the analogy of beings and of things without effort as in a game. This faculty constitutes an essential part of the realization of the task that the Master charged his disciples with: "Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a c h i l d shall not enter it" (Mark, x, 15).

The little c h i l d does not "work" — he p l a y s. But how serious he is, i.e. how concentrated, when he plays! His attention is <u>still</u> complete and undivided, whereas with he who approaches the kingdom of God it becomes <u>again</u> entire and undivided. And this is the Arcanum of intellectual geniality :- the vision of the unity of beings and things through the immediate perception of their correspondences — through consciousness concentrated without effort.

The Master did not want us to become puerile; what he wanted is that we attain the geniality of intelligence and heart which is <u>analogous</u> - not identical - to the attitude of the child, who carries only easy burdens and renders all his yokes light.

The Magician represents the man who has attained harmony and equilibrium between the spontaneity of the Unconscious (in the sense given to it by C. G. JUNG) and the deliberate action of the Conscious (in the sense of "I" or ego-consciousness).

His state of consciousness is the <u>synthesis</u> of the Conscious and the Unconscious — of creative spontaneity and deliberately executed activity. It is the state of consciousness that the psychological school of C.G. JUNG calls "individuation", or "synthesis of the conscious and unconscious" (the two elements in the personality), or.. " s y n t h e s i s of the s e l f " (C.G. Jung and C. Kerényi, "Introduction to a Science of Mythology"; trsl. R.F.C. Hull, London, 1951, p.115).

This synthesis renders possible concentration without effort and intellectual vision without effort, which are the practical and theoretical aspects of all fruitfulness in both practical and intellectual realms.

Friedrich SCHILLER seems to have had consciousness of this Arcanum when he advanced his doctrine of the synthesis between intellectual consciousness, imposing heavy burdens of duties and of rules, and... the instinctive nature of man, in the "S p e i l t r e i b" (the urge to play). The "true" and the "desired" must, according to him, find their synthesis in the "beautiful", for it is only in the

beautiful that the "Speiltreib" renders the burden of the "true" or the "just" light and raises at the same time the darkness of instinctive forces to the level of light and consciousness (cf. Friedrich Schiller, "Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man"; trsl. E.M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby, Oxford, 1967, pp. 331-332, note). In other words, he who sees the beauty of that which he recognizes as true cannot fail to love it — and in loving it the element of constraint in the duty prescribed by the true will disappear: duty becomes a delight. It is thus that "work" is transformed into "play" and concentration without effort becomes possible.

But the first Arcanum, the Arcanum of practical and theoretical fruitfulness, while proclaiming the effectiveness of serious play (which is the complete Tarot) contains at the same time a serious warning:- there is Play and play, there is the Magician and the magician; this is why anyone who confuses lack of concentration with concentration without effort, and streams of simple mental associations with the vision without effort of correspondences by analogy, will necessarily become a charlatan.

The Arcanum of the Magician is twofold. It has two aspects: he invites us on the path which leads to geniality; and he warns us of the danger of the path which leads to charlatanism.

I must add that often — too often, alas! — the teachers of occultism follow the two paths at the same time and that which they teach contains elements of genius mixed with elements of charlatanism. May the first Arcanum of the Tarot be always present before us as a kind of "guardian of the threshold"; may he invite us to cross the threshold of work and effort in order to enter into activity without effort, and knowledge without effort, but may he at the same time warn us that the more we go beyond the threshold, the more work, effort and experience on this side of the threshold will be indispensable for the attainment of real truth. May the Magician say to us, and may he repeat it each day: "To perceive and to know, to try and to be able to, are all different things. There are mirages above, as there are mirages below; you only know that which is verified by the agreement of all forms of experience in its totality — experience of the senses, moral experience, psychic experience, the collective experience of other seekers for the truth, and finally the experience of those whose knowing merits the title of wisdom and whose striving has been crowned by the title of saint. Academia and the Church stipulate methodical and moral conditions for one who desires to progress. Carry them out strictly, before and after each flight into the region beyond the domain

of work and effort. If you do this, you will be a sage and a mage. If you do not do this – you will be only a charlatan!" ----

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Appendix to the 1st Letter:--

I. Historical note concerning the "EMERALD TABLE": Here is the Latin text of the Emerald Table, known since the time of Albertus Magnus, as given by Julius Ruska, "Tabula Smaragdina" (Heidelberg, 1926), p.2:

Versio Tabulae Smaragdinae Hermetis
Qualis ea vulgo Latino Idiomate, e Phoenicio expressa circumfertur

Verba secretorum Hermetis Trismegisti

1. Verum, sine mendacio, certum et verissimum.
2. Quod est inferius, est sicut (id) quod est superius, et quod est superius, est sicut (id) quod est inferius, ad perpetranda [1] miracula rei unius.
3. Et sicut omnes res fuerunt ab uno, meditatione [2] unius: sic omnes res natae fuerunt ab hac una re, adaptione. [3]
4. Pater ejus est Sol, mater ejus Luna; portavit illud ventus in ventre suo; nutrix ejus terra est.
5. Pater omnis thelesmi totius mundi est hic.
6. Vis (virtus) ejus integra est, si versa fuerit in terram.
7. Separabis terram ab igne, subtile a spisso, suaviter, cum magno ingenio.
8. Ascendit a terra in coelum, iterumque descendit in terram, et recepit vim superiorum et inferiorum. Sic habebis gloriam totius mundi. Ideo fugiat (fugiet) a te omnis obscuritas.
9. Hic (haec) est totius fortitudinis fortitudo fortis: quia vincet omnem rem subtilem, omnemque solidam [4] penetrabit.
10. Sic mundus creatus est.
11. Hinc adaptationes erunt mirabiles, quarum modus est hic.
12. Itaque vocatus sum HERMES TRISMEGISTUS, habens tres partes Philosophiae totius mundi.
13. Completum est quod dixi de operatione Solis.

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[1] According to K.C. Schmieder, "Geschichte der Alchemie" (Halle, 1832), p.30, one meets the variants "penetranda" and "praeparanda".

[2] According to an Arabic manuscript, discovered subsequently, this should read "mediatione".

[3] Another (inexact) variant is "adoptione".

[4] Another variant is "et omne solidum".

The following English translation from the Latin text "Tabula Smaragdina" is based on that by Robert Steele and Dorothy Singer, "Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine" xxi (1928), p.42, who also discuss the manuscript tradition of the text, its content, and the sources of the text (ibid., pp.41-57).

1. True it is, without falsehood, certain and most true.
2. That which is above is like to that which is below, and that which is below is like to that which is above, to accomplish the miracles of (the) one thing (or Unity).
3. And as all things were by contemplation (meditation) of (the) One, so all things arose from this one thing by a single act of adaptation.
4. The father thereof is the sun; the mother the moon; the wind carried it in its womb; the earth is the nurse thereof.
5. It is the father of all works of wonder (thelema) throughout the whole world.
6. The power thereof is perfect, if it be cast on to earth.
7. It will separate the element of earth from that of fire, the subtle from the gross, gently and with great sagacity.
8. It doth ascend from earth to heaven; again it doth descend to earth, and uniteth in itself the force from things superior and things inferior. Thus thou wilt possess the glory of the brightness of the whole world, and all obscurity will fly far from thee.
9. This thing is the strongest of all powers, the force of all forces, for it overcometh every subtle thing and doth penetrate every solid substance.
10. Thus was this world created.
11. Hence there will be marvellous adaptations achieved, of which the manner is this.
12. For this reason I am called Hermes Trismegistus, because I hold three parts of the wisdom of the world.
13. That which I had to say about the operation of <u>sol</u> is completed.

As the above (Latin) text has been known in the Occident only since Albertus Magnus (1193/1206 - 1280) and as no other text or manuscript for an earlier date could be found over the centuries, historians at the beginning of this century were of the opinion that Albertus Magnus was the author of the Emerald Table. It was considered apocryphal not only from the point of view of its authenticity as a work of Hermes Trismegistus, but also from the point of view of its intrinsic authenticity as a work worthy of inclusion in the "Corpus Hermeticum" (= the collection of apocryphal texts from the first centuries of our era attributed to authors writing under the name - or pseudonym - of Hermes Trismegistus). Now, the text of the Emerald Table is not contained in what is considered to be the most complete edition of the "Corpus Hermeticum" - that of Walter Scott, "Hermetica" in 4 volumes (Oxford, 1924). The same remark applies also to "Corpus Hermeticum" edited and translated by Nock and Festugière

(4 volumes; Paris, 1960). Scott wrote the following: - "the masses of rubbish which fall under the... head... of writings concerning astrology, magic, alchemy and kindred forms of pseudo-science... the contents of which are also ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus." (Walter Scott, "Hermetica", Oxford, 1924, vol. i, p.1). The criterion which Scott makes use of to establish if a writing attributed to Hermes Trismegistus is to be included in the "Corpus Hermeticum" or to be rejected is whether it is concerned with religious and philosophical problems or not. In other words, the writings dealing with problems of religion and philosophy belong to the "Corpus Hermeticum", whereas the others are not worthy of inclusion, e.g. those writings concerned with Nature (in a "pseudo-scientific" manner) are to be rejected.

However, Hermes himself says: ...." I bear in mind that many of my writings have been addressed to him (Ammon), as again many of my treatises on Nature ...have been addressed to Tat..." ("Asclepius", Prologue; trsl. W. Scott, "Hermetica", vol. i, p.287) — How can it be permitted to reject all the writings on Nature and consider the sole category ("addressed to Ammon") as authentic, when one has knowledge of the fact that the author of a writing ("Asclepius"), recognized as authentic in the "Corpus Hermeticum", has proclaimed in an explicit manner that he is the author of another category of writings, namely those concerned with Nature?

With respect to the Emerald Table, the affinity of its ideas with those expressed in "Asclepius" are all too apparent. Thus, for example, Hermes says:-

> "(Air) enters into earth and water; and fire rises into air. That only which tends upward is life-giving; and that which tends downward is subservient to it. Moreover, all that descends from on high is generative; and that which issues from below is nutritive. Earth, which alone stands fast in its own place, receives all that is generative into itself, and renders back all that it has received. ("Asclepius"; trsl. W. Scott, "Hermetica", vol. i, p.289)

Why should these ideas be considered as more "religious and philosophical" than those of the Emerald Table which also speaks of movements above and below and of generation by Father Sun and Mother Moon, and similarly of the nourishing function of the Earth?

Perhaps because at the time of Walter Scott's researches no other text of the Emerald Table had been found prior to the XIIIth century?

Now, in 1926 the "Heidelberger Akten der Von-Portheim-Stiftung" published a work by Julius RUSKA: "Tabula Smaragdina. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der hermetischen Literatur". This book contains a description of G. BERGSTRÄSSER's manuscript in Arabic. This manuscript comprises 97 folios, of which 25 relate the history of Joseph, 40 contain an alchemical treatise, which includes as a summary the text of the Emerald Table (in Arabic, like the entire manuscript), followed by 32 folios devoted to other subjects, notably particulars concerning the calendar of the prophet Daniel. The alchemical treatise was written by a priest named SAGIJUS of NABULUS — its contents originating from the master BALINAS the WISE (which is the Arabic name for

APOLLONIUS of TYANA), who himself had discovered it in an underground chamber. Here is a rendering in English of the German translation of the Arabic text of the Emerald Table that is given in BERGSTRÄSSER's manuscript (cf. Ruska, pp. 113-114):-

"Here is that which the priest Sagijus of NABULUS has dictated concerning the entrance of Balinas into the hidden chamber (the following words of wisdom were found at the end of the book by Balinas the Wise):-

"After my entrance into the chamber, where the Talisman was set up, I came up to an old man sitting on a golden throne, who was holding an emerald table in one hand. And behold, the following - in Syriac, the primordial language - was written thereon:--

1) Here (is) a true explanation, concerning which there can be no doubt.
2) It attests: The above (comes) from the below, and the below from the above - the work of the miracles of Unity.
3) And things have been (formed) from this primal substance through a single act. How wonderful is this work! It is the main (Principle) of the world and is its maintainer.
4) Its father is the Sun and its mother the Moon; the wind has borne it in its body; and the earth has nourished it.
5) (It is) the father of Talismen and the Protector of miracles,
6) whose powers are perfect, and whose lights are confirmed (?),
7) a fire that becomes earth. Separate the earth from the fire, so you will attain the subtle as more inherent than the gross, with care and sagacity.
8) It rises from earth to heaven, so as to draw the lights of the heights to itself, and descends (again) to the earth; thus within it are the forces of the above and the below; because the light of lights (is) within it, thus does the darkness flee before it.
9) (It is) the force of forces, which overcomes every subtle thing and penetrates into everything gross.
10) The structure of the small world (microcosm) is in accordance with the structure of the great world (macrocosm).
11) And accordingly proceed the knowledgeable.
12) And to this aspired Hermes, who was threefold graced with Wisdom.
13) And this is his last book, which he concealed in the chamber. "

But Julius RUSKA is not the only one to have discovered an Arabic text of the Emerald Table. The author of "Alchemy", E. J. HOLMYARD (Pelican, London, 1957), points out that he found a shortened text of the Emerald Table in Arabic. This text is part of the "Second Book of the Element of the Foundation" by JABIR or GEBER (722-815). Prior to this discovery, made in 1923, only the medieval Latin text was known of. Subsequently, another variant in Arabic was discovered by Ruska in a

book entitled "The Secret of Creation" attributed to Apollonius. Jabir (or Geber) himself, in giving the text of the Emerald Table states that he is quoting Apollonius. Now, KRAUS has shown that "The Secret of Creation" was written, at least in its final edition, during the Caliphate of al-Ma'mun (813-833), and it includes parallels with a book written at this same time by JOB of EDESSA. The latter was a scholar whose translations from Syriac into Arabic merited the praise of even such a severe critic as HUNAIN IBN ISHAQ. Therefore, even if Job did not write "The Secret of Creation", he probably drew from the same, more ancient sources as the author of the said treatise. KRAUS has shown that one of these sources was the writings of NEMESIUS, bishop of EMESA (Homs) in Syria during the 2nd half of the 4th century A.D. Nemesius wrote in Greek, but his book "On the Nature of Man" does not contain the text of the Table. To summarize, it can be concluded that the most ancient rendering of the Table that is known, namely that in Arabic, was probably translated from Syriac, but this can equally well have been based on an original Greek text. Whether this original dates back to the time of Apollonius is an insoluble problem (cf. Ruska, op. cit., pp. 78-79, pp. 96-97).

The present state of historical studies on the Emerald Table is therefore as follows:- it was known in Arabic as a translation from Syriac at the beginning of the IXth century; two variants in Arabic are extant; there is no reason to reject the Arabic tradition that it was translated from Syriac, or for that matter the tradition that it originated with Apollonius.

One could add that if there is no reason to doubt that it originated with Apollonius, there is no more reason to reject the tradition that Apollonius in his turn found it in the manner described by the priest SAGIJUS of NABULUS.

Be that as it may, it is immediately apparent that the Table is of a considerably more ancient origin than was believed up to 1923, and consequently there is room to reconsider the opinion that it is not worthy of inclusion in the "Corpus Hermeticum".

For our part, we have every reason – subjective as well as objective – sufficient for us "in foro interno" (i.e. in good conscience) to be sure that the "Emerald Table" is without doubt the only absolutely authentic fragment in the whole "Corpus Hermeticum". And this, moreover, in the sense that its author is neither the "third Hermes" nor the "second", but actually the f i r s t – that is to say the founder of the Hermetic tradition as such – in which tradition the principal links (according to FICINO, writing in 1471) are: Hermes Trismegistus – Orpheus – Pythagoras – Philolaus ("Divi Platonis nostri praeceptor") – Plato – the Neopythagoreans (Apollonius) – the Neoplatonists (Plotinus).

Letter II: Meditation on the second Major Arcanum of the Tarot -- "THE HIGH PRIESTESS" "LA PAPESSE"

Wisdom has built her house,
She has set up her seven pillars.
(Proverbs ix, 1)

Dear Unknown Friend,

As set forth in the preceding Letter, the Magician is the arcanum of intellectual geniality and cordiality, the arcanum of true spontaneity. Concentration without effort and the perception of correspondences in accordance with the law of analogy are the principal implications of this arcanum of spiritual fecundity. It is the arcanum of the pure act of intelligence.

But the pure act is like fire or wind: it appears and disappears, and when exhausted it gives way to another act.

> "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit." (John iii, 8)

The pure act in itself cannot be grasped; it is only its reflection which renders it perceptible, comparable and understandable or, in other words, it is by virtue of the reflection that we become conscious of it. The reflection of the pure act produces an inner representation, which becomes retained by the memory; memory becomes the source of communication by means of the spoken word; and the communicated word becomes fixed by means of writing, by producing the "book".

The second Arcanum, "The High Priestess" is that of the reflection of the pure act of the first Arcanum up to the point where it becomes "Book". It shows us how Fire and Wind become Science and Book. Or, in other words, how "Wisdom builds her house".

As we have pointed out, one becomes conscious of the pure act of intelligence only by means of its reflection. We require an inner "mirror" in order to be conscious of the pure act or to know "whence it comes or whither it goes". The breath of the Spirit – or the pure act of intelligence – is certainly an event, but it does not suffice, itself alone, for us to become conscious of it. "Con-sciousness" (con-science in French) is the result of two principles – the active, activating principle and the passive, reflecting principle. In order to "know" from where the breath of the Spirit comes and where it goes, Water is required to reflect it. This is why the conversation of the Master with Nicodemus, to which we have referred, enunciates the absolute condition for the conscious experience of the Divine Breath – or the Kingdom of God:

> "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God" (John iii, 5)

"Truly, truly" – the Master refers here twice to "truth" in this mantric (i.e. magical) formula of the reality of con-sciousness. By these words he states that full consciousness of the truth is the result of "inbreathed" truth and reflected truth. Reintegrated consciousness, which is the Kingdom of God, presupposes two renovations, of a significance comparable to birth, in the two constituent elements of consciousness – active Spirit and reflecting Water. Spirit must become divine Breath in place of arbitrary, personal activity, and Water must become a perfect mirror of the divine Breath instead of being agitated by disturbances of the imagination, passions and personal desires. Reintegrated consciousness must be born of Water and Spirit, after Water has once again become Virginal and Spirit has once again become divine Breath or the Holy Spirit. Reintegrated consciousness therefore becomes born within the human soul in a way <u>analogous</u> to the birth or historical incarnation of the WORD:

Et incarnatus est de Spirity Sancto
Ex Maria Virgine
(By the power of the Holy Spirit the Word became incarnate from the Virgin Mary)

The re-birth from Water and Spirit which the Master indicates to Nicodemus is the re-establishment of the state of consciousness prior to the Fall, where the Spirit was divine Breath and where this Breath was reflected by virginal Nature. This is Christian "YOGA". Its aim is not "radical deliverance" ("Mukti"), i.e. the state of consciousness without breath and without reflection, but rather that which is the complete and perfect reponse to divine action – baptism from Water and the Spirit. These two kinds of baptism bring about the reintegration of the two constituent elements of consciousness as such – the active element and the passive element. There is no consciousness without these two elements, and the suppression of this duality by means of a practical method such as that inspired by the ideal of unity ("Advaita" – non-duality) must necessarily lead to the extinction not of being but rather of consciousness. Then this would not be a "new birth" of consciousness, but instead would be its <u>return</u> to the pre-natal embryonic cosmic state.

On the other hand, this is what Plotinus says concerning the duality underlying all forms and every level of consciousness, namely the active principle and its mirror:

> "...when the mirror is there, the mirror-image is produced, but when it is not there or is not in the right state, the object of which the image would have been is (all the same) actually there. In the same way as regards the soul, when that kind of thing in us which mirrors the images of thought and intellect is undisturbed, we see them and know them in a way parallel to sense-perception, along with the prior knowledge that it is intellect and thought that are active. But when this is broken because the harmony of the body is upset, thought and intellect operate without an image, and then intellectual activity takes place without a mind-picture." (Plotinus, "Ennead" I, iv, 10; trsl. A. H. Armstrong, London, 1966, pp. 199 and 201)

This is the Platonic conception of consciousness, the thorough study of which can serve by way of introduction to the nocturnal conversation of the Master with Nicodemus on the

reintegration of consciousness or the aim of Christian "yoga".

Christian "Yoga" does not aspire directly to unity, but rather to the unity of two. This is very important for understanding the standpoint which one takes towards the infinitely serious problem of unity and duality. For this problem can open the door to truly divine mysteries and can also close them to us... for ever, perhaps, who knows? Everything depends on its comprehension. We can decide in favor of monism and say to ourselves that there can be only one sole essence, one sole being. Or we can decide – in view of considerable historical and personal experience – in favor of dualism and say to ourselves that there are two principles in the world: good and evil, spirit and matter, and that, entirely incomprehensible though this duality is at root, it must be admitted as an incontestable fact. We can, moreover, decide in favor of a third point of view, namely that of l o v e as the cosmic principle which presupposes duality and postulates its non-substantial but essential unity.

These three points of view are found at the basis of the Vedanta ("Advaita") and Spinozism (Monism), Manichaeism and certain gnostic schools (dualism), and the Judeo-Christian current (L o v e).

In order to give more clarity and precision to this problem, as well as to attain greater depth – we shall take for our point of departure what Louis Claude de SAINT-MARTIN says concerning the number two in his book "Des Nombres" ("On Numbers"):-

> "Now, in order to show how they (numbers) are related to their base of activity, let us begin by observing the working of unity and of the number two. When we contemplate an important truth, such as the universal power of the Creator, his majesty, his love, his profound light, or suchlike attributes, we bear ourselves wholly towards this supreme model of all things; all our faculties are suspended in order to fill us with him, and we really only make ourselves one with him. This is the active image of unity, and the number one in our languages is the expression of this unity or invisible union which, existing intimately between all attributes of this unity, must equally exist between it and all its produced creations. But if, after having born all our faculties of contemplation towards this universal source, we return our gaze to ourselves and fill ourselves with our own contemplation, in such a way that we regard ourselves as the origin of some of the inner light or satisfaction that this source has procured for us, from that moment we establish two centers of contemplation, two separate and rival principles, two bases which are not linked; lastly, we establish two unities, with this difference – that one is real and the other is apparent." (p.2) – Then he adds:- "But to divide being through the middle is to divide it into two parts; it is to pass from the whole to the quality of the part or the half, and it is here that the true origin of illegitimate twofoldness lies... this example is sufficient to show us the birth of the number t w o – to show us the origin of evil..." (p.3). (Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, "Des Nombres", Nice,

1946, pp. 2-3)

Duality therefore signifies the establishment of two centers of contemplation, two separate and rival principles – one real and the other apparent – and this is the origin of evil, which is only i l l e g i t i m a t e t w o f o l d n e s s.

Is this the <u>only</u> possible interpretation of duality, twofoldness, the number <u>two</u>? Does there not exist a <u>legitimate twofoldness</u>? A twofoldness which does not signify the <u>diminution</u> of unity, but rather its qualitative enrichment?

If we return to the conception of Saint-MARTIN of "two centers of contemplation" which are "two separate and rival principles", we can ask ourselves if they must <u>necessarily</u> be separate and rival? Does not the expression "con-templation" itself, chosen by Saint-Martin, suggest the idea of two centers which contemplate simultaneously – as would two eyes if they were placed vertically one above the other – the <u>two</u> aspects of reality, the phenomenal and the noumenal? And that it is by virtue of the two centers or "eyes" that we are – or are able to be – conscious of "that which is above and that which is below"? Could one, for example, enunciate the principal formula of the Emerald Table if one had only one " e y e " or center of contemplation instead of t w o?

Now, the S e p h e r Y e t z i r a h says:-

> "<u>Two</u> is the breath which comes from the Spirit, and formed in it are twenty-two sounds... but the Spirit is first and above these."- (Sepher Yetzirah i,10; trsl. W. Wynn Westcott, London, 1893, p.16)

Or, in other words, t w o is the divine Breath and its Reflection; it is the origin of the "Book of Revelation" which is the world as well as the Holy Scripture. T w o is the number of con-sciousness of the breath of the Spirit and its "formed" (engraved) letters. It is the number of the reintegration of consciousness, signified by the Master to Nicodemus by the virginal Water and the Breath of the Holy Spirit.

T w o is all this and it is even more. Not only is the number <u>two</u> not necessarily the "illegitimate twofoldness" described by Saint-Martin, but also it is the n u m b e r of l o v e or the fundamental condition of love which it necessarily presupposes and postulates, because love is inconceivable without the L o v e r and the L o v e d, without ME and YOU, without O N E and the O T H E R.

If God were only One and if He had not created the World, he would not be the God revealed by the Master, the God of whom St. John says:

> "God <u>is</u> love; and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." (I John iv,16)

He would not be this, because he would love no one other than himself. As this is impossible from the point of view of the God of love, he is revealed to human consciousness as the eternal Trinity – the Loving One who loves, the Loved One who loves, and their Love who loves them: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Do you not also experience, dear Unknown Friend, a feeling of discomfort each time that you encounter a formula stating the higher attributes of the Holy Trinity, such as "Power, Wisdom, Love" or "Being, Consciousness, Beatitude" (Sat-Chit-Ananda)?

Personally, I always experienced this discomfort, and it was only later, many years later, that I understood its cause. It is because God is l o v e, that He admits of no comparison, that He surpasses all – power, wisdom, and even being. One can, if one wishes, speak of the "power of love", the "wisdom of love" and the "life of love" in order to make a distinction between the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, but one cannot put on the same level love on the one hand and wisdom, power and being on the other. For God i s love and it is love – it is only love – which by its presence gives worth to power and to wisdom and to being itself. For <u>being</u> without love is deprived of all worth. Being without love would be the most appalling torment – the Inferno itself!

Does love therefore surpass b e i n g? How could one doubt this after the revelation of of this truth through 19 centuries by the Mystery of Calvary? "That which is below is like to that which is above" – and is not the sacrifice of His life, His terrestrial being, accomplished through love by God Incarnate, is this not the demonstration of the superiority of love over being? And is not the Resurrection the demonstration of the other aspect of the primacy of love over being, i.e. that love is not only superior to being but also that it engenders it and restores it?

The problem of the primacy of being or of love goes back to antiquity. PLATO raised it when he said:-

> "The sun, I presume you will say, not only furnishes to visibles the power of visibility but it also provides for their generation and growth and nurture though it is not itself generation... In like manner, then, you are to say that the objects of knowledge not only receive from the presence of the good their being known, but their very existence and essence is derived to them from it, though the good itself is not essence but still transcends essence in dignity and surpassing power." (Plato, "The Republic", 509 B; trsl. P. Shorey, 2 vols. London, 1930, 1935, vol. ii, p. 107)

And seven centuries later SALLUSTIUS, the friend of Emperor Julian, said:-

> "Now if the First Cause was soul, everything would be animated by soul, if intelligence, everything would be intellectual, if being, everything would share in being. Some in fact, seeing that all things possess being, have thought that the First Cause was being. This would be correct if things that were in being were in being only and were not good. If, however, things that are are by reason of their goodness and share in the good, then what is first must be higher than being and in fact good. A very clear indication of this is that fine souls for the sake of the good despise being, when they are willing to face danger for country or friends or virtue." (Sallustius, "Concerning the Gods and the Universe", v; trsl. A. D. Nock, Cambridge, 1926, p. 11)

The primacy of G o o d ("Good" being the abstract philosophical notion of the <u>reality</u> of love) in relation to being has also been discussed by PLOTINUS ("Enneads" vi, 7, 23-24), by PROCLUS ("In Platonis Theologiam" ii, 4 = "On the Theology of Plato"), and by DIONYSIUS the AREOPAGITE ("De divinus nominibus", iv = "On the Divine Names"). St. BONAVENTURA ("Collationes in Hexaemeron" x, 10) tried to reconcile this Platonic primacy of Good with the

Mosaic primacy of Being: "Ego sum qui sum" ("I am that I am", Exodus iii, 14) – asserted first by John DAMASCENUS (John of Damascus) and then by St. THOMAS AQUINAS. The latter states that amongst all the divine names there is one which is eminently suited to God, and this is Qui est ("He who is"), precisely because it signifies nothing other than being itself. Etienne GILSON, in harmony with St. Thomas, John Damascenus and Moses, writes concerning being: "In this principle lies an inexhaustible metaphysical fecundity... there is but one God and this God is Being, that is the cornerstone of all Christian philosophy, and it was not Plato, it was not even ARISTOTLE, it was MOSES who instituted it." – (Etienne Gilson, "The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy"; trsl. A.H.C. Downes, London, 1950, p.51)

Yet what is the full significance of the adoption of the primacy of b e i n g, instead of that of g o o d, or according to St. JOHN, that of l o v e?

The idea of being is neutral from the point of view of the moral life. There is no need to have experience of the Good and the Beautiful in order to arrive at it. The experience solely of the mineral realm already suffices to arrive at the morally neutral idea of being. For the mineral i s. For this reason the idea of being is objective, i.e. it postulates, in the last analysis, the thing underlying everything, the permanent substance behind all phenomena.

I invite you, dear Unknown Friend, to close your eyes and to render an exact account of the image which accompanies this idea in your mental imagination. Do you not find the vague image of a substance without color or form, very similar to water in the sea?

Whatever your subjective representation of being as such, the idea of being is morally indifferent and is, consequently, essentially naturalistic. It implies something passive – a given or an unalterable fact. In contrast, when you think of love in the Johannine sense or of the Platonic idea of good, you find yourself facing an essential activity, which is in no way neutral from the point of view of moral life, but which is the heart itself. And the image which accompanies this notion of pure actuality would be that of fire or of the sun (PLATO compared the idea of Good to the Sun, and its light to truth), in place of the image of an indefinite fluid substance.

THALES and HERACLITUS have two different conceptions. The one sees in w a t e r the essence of things and the other sees it in f i r e. But here, primarily, it is so that the idea of G O O D and its summit – L O V E – is due to the conception of the world as a m o r a l process, whereas the idea of Being and its summit – the God qui est – is due to the conception of the world as that of a fact of Nature. The idea of Good (and of Love) is essentially subjective. It is absolutely necessary to have had experience of psychic and spiritual life in order to be able to conceive of it, whilst – as we have already indicated – the idea of being, being essentially objective, presupposes only a certain degree of outward experience... of the mineral realm, for example.

The consequence of choosing between these two – I will not say "points of view", but rather "attitudes of soul" lies above all in the intrinsic nature of the experience of practical mysticism which consequently derives from this choice. He who chooses Being

will aspire to true being and he who chooses Love will aspire to Love. For one only finds that for which one seeks. The seeker for true being will arrive at the experience of repose in being, and, as there cannot be two true beings ("the illegitimate twofoldness" of Saint-Martin) or two separate co-eternal substances but only one being and one substance, the center of "false being" will be suppressed ("false being" = Ahamkara, or the illusion of the separate existence of a separate substance of the "self"). The characteristic of this mystical way is that one loses the capacity to cry. An advanced pupil of Yoga or Vedanta will for ever have dry eyes, while the masters of the Cabbala, according to the Zohar, cry much and often. Christian mysticism speaks also of the "gift of tears" – as a precious gift of divine Grace. The Master cried in front of the tomb of Lazarus. Thus the outer characteristic of those who choose the other mystical way, that of the God of Love, is that they have the "gift of tears". This is in keeping with the very essence of their mystical experience. Their union with the Divine is not the absorption of their being by Divine Being, but rather the experience of the Breath of Divine Love, the Illumination by Divine Love, and the Warmth of Divine Love. The soul which receives this undergoes such a miraculous experience that it... cries. In this mystical experience fire meets with FIRE. Then nothing is extinguished in the human personality but, on the contrary, everything is set ablaze. This is the experience of "legitimate twofoldness" or the union of two separate substances in one sole essence. The substances remain separate as long as they are bereft of that which is the most precious in all existence: free alliance in l o v e.

I have spoken of "two substances" and "one essence". Here it is necessary to really grasp the significance of these two terms – substance (substantia) and essence (essentia), whose exact distinction is today almost effaced. However, at one time these two terms denoted two distinct categories not only of ideas but also of existence and consciousness itself.

PLATO established the distinction between einai (ἒἶναι, being) and ousia (οὐσία, essence). "Being" signifies for him the fact of existence as such, whereas "essence" designates existence due to Ideas.

> "Everything which has existence has essence through its share in Ideas, which are themselves essences. The term essence will therefore not designate for us abstract existence but the reality of the Idea." (A.J.E. FOUILLÉE, "La philosophie de Platon", 4 vols., Paris, 1888-89, vol. ii, pp. 106-7)

Essence (essentia, ousia) signifies the positive act itself by means of which Being is (in the Cabbala one would speak of the act of emanation of the first Sephirah, K e t h e r – whose corresponding Divine name is A H I H (eyeh) "I am" – from A I N - S O P H, the Unlimited)

> "as if e s s e could generate the present participle active e s s e n s, whence e s s e n t i a would be derived." (Etienne GILSON, "The Spirit of Medieval

Philosophy"; trsl. A.H.C. Downes, London, 1950, p. 54)

Thus the term essentia properly belongs only to God alone, everything else enters into the category of substantiae. This is what the Church Father and Platonist, St. AUGUSTINE, says:-

"...manifestum est Deum abusive substantiam vocari, ut nomine usitatiore intellegitur essentia, quod vere ac proprie dicitur; ita ut fortasse solum Deum dici oporteat essentiam" – "...hence it is clear that God is not properly called a substance, and that he is better called by the more usual term essence, which term is a right and proper one; so much so indeed that perhaps God alone ought to be called essence." (St. Augustine, "De Trinitate" vii, 5,10)

The distinction between substance and essence, between Reality and the Ideal, between being and love (or the Idea of Good), or between He who is and Ain-Soph is also the key to the Gospel according to John:

"No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known." (John i, 18)

"No one has ever seen God", i.e. no one has ever contemplated God face to face while maintaining his personality. For "to see" signifies "to perceive while being in the face of that which one perceives". Before Jesus Christ there were, without doubt, numerous examples of the experience of God – being "seized by God" (experience of the Prophets), being "immersed in God" (experience of Yogis and Mystics in antiquity), or seeing the revelation of His work – the world (experience of Sages and Philosophers in antiquity); but no one ever saw God. For neither the inspiration of the Prophets, nor the immersion in God of the Mystics, nor the contemplation of God in the mirror of the creation by the Sages is equivalent to the new experience of the "vision" of God – the "beatific vision" of Christian theology. For this "vision" takes place in the domain of essence transcending all substance; it is not a fusion, but an encounter in the domain of essence, in which the human personality (the consciousness of self) remains not only intact and without impediment, but also becomes "that which it is", i.e. becomes truly itself – such as the Thought of God has conceived it for all eternity. The words of St. John, when thought of in this way, render intelligible those of the Master in the Gospel of St. John:-

"All who came before me are thieves and robbers" (John x, 8).

There is a profound mystery in these words. Indeed, how may they be understood alongside numerous other sayings of the Master referring to MOSES, DAVID and other prophets, who were all before him?

Now, it is a matter here not of theft and robbery, but of the principle of initiation before and after Jesus Christ. The masters prior to His Coming taught the experience of God at the expense of the personality, which had to be diminished when it was "seized" by God or "immersed" in God. In this sense – in the sense of the diminution or augmentation of the "talent of gold" entrusted to humanity, the

personality, which is the "image and likeness of God" (Goethe: "Das höchste Gut der Erdenkinder ist doch die Persönlichkeit" – "The highest treasure of the children of earth is surely the personality") – the masters prior to Christ were "thieves and robbers". They certainly bore testimony to God but the way which they taught and practiced was that of depersonalization, which made them witnesses ("martyrs") of God. The greatness of Bhagavan, the Buddha, was the high degree of depersonalization which he attained. The masters of Yoga are masters of depersonalization. The ancient philosophers – those who really lived as "philosophers" – practiced depersonalization. This is the case above all with the Stoics.

And this is why all those who have chosen the way of depersonalization are unable to cry and why they have dry eyes for ever. For it is the personality which cries and which alone is capable of the "gift of tears". "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted!" (Matthew v,4).

Therefore this is one aspect at least (+there is also another, more profound one, but I do not know if it will be possible to write about it in one of the following Letters) according to which we may say that the mysterious words relating to "thieves and robbers" can become a source of radiant light. When the Gospel speaks of those who came before Jesus Christ, it is not only time which the word "before" designates, but also the grade of initiation – they are thieves and robbers with respect to the personality, since they taught the depersonalization of the human being. In contrast, the Master also says: "I have come that they (the sheep) may have life and have it abundantly" (John x,10); in other words, the Master has come in order to render more living that which is dear to him and which is menaced with dangers, i.e. the s h e e p as the image of the personality! This appears inconceivable in the presence of the ideal of the personality according to NIETZSCHE and his "superman" or the great historical personalities such as Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Napoleon and... the "great personalities" of modern times!

No, dear Unknown Friend, possession by the will-to-power or the will-to-glory makes neither the personality nor its greatness. The "sheep" in the language of love of the Master signify neither the "great personality" nor the "little personality", but simply the individual soul which lives. He wants the soul to live without danger and to have as intensive a life as God has destined for it. The "sheep" is the living entity, surrounded by dangers, which is the object of divine care. Doesn't this suffice? Is there too little brilliance and glory here? Is this too feeble an image to be able to arrive at, for example, a magician evoking good and evil spirits?

Here it is a matter of drawing attention to one thing, to one sole thing: the language of the Master is that of love and not that of psychology, philosophy or science. The powerful magician, the artistic genius, the profound thinker and the radiant mystic certainly merit all these qualifications and perhaps still greater ones, but they do not dazzle God. In the eyes of God they are dear sheep to him; in consideration of them he desires

that they shall never go astray and that they shall have life increasingly and unceasingly.

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Before completing our reflections on the problem of the number two, the problem of legitimate twofoldness and illegitimate twofoldness, I should pay tribute to Saint-YVES d'ALVEYDRE, who set this problem in motion with his passionate intellectuality. In his work "Mission des Juifs" ("Mission of the Jews", Paris, 1956), he concentrated on the comparison of the complete divine name (Y O D - H É - V A V - H É) with the incomplete name (H É - V A V - H É). In the first case, Y O D, essence, is considered to be the supreme principle of Hierarchy; in the second case it is H É, substance, to which priority is attributed. It is in this way that Spiritualism and Naturalism originated – with all the consequences they entail in religious, philosophical, scientific and social spheres. The problem – as a formula – is therefore put with admirable exactness and precision, and it is this that I want to draw attention to. But I am at the same time obliged to say that exact and precise as it is, the material content that Saint-Yves gives to it leaves much to be desired. In particular he states that the principle of pure intellect is Y O D, and to H É - V A V - H É as material content he attributes the principle of love and soul, or the "passionate principle". Thus, in attributing priority to the intellect as the masculine, spiritual principle, he subordinates love to it as the feminine, psychic principle. Now, the Master taught of the Father, who is Love. The intellect being the reflection – or light – of the fire principle of Love, can only be the feminine principle, Sophia or Wisdom, who assists the Creator in the work of creation, according to the Old Testament. The gnostic tradition also considers Sophia as the feminine principle. Pure intellect is that which reflects; love is that which acts.

The fact that man is usually more intellectual than woman does not signify that the intellect is a masculine principle. On the contrary, rather: man, being physically masculine, is feminine from the psychic point of view, while woman, being physically feminine, is masculine (active) in her soul. Now, the intellect is the feminine side of the soul, while the fertilizing imagination is the masculine principle. The intellect that is not fertilized by imagination guided by the heart is sterile. It depends on impulses which it receives from the participation of the heart by means of the imagination.

With regard to the third principle, the Spirit, it is neither intellect nor imagination, but Love-Wisdom. In principle it ought to be androgynous, but in practice it is not always so.

This, therefore, is all that it seems to me necessary to say on the subject of the problem of two and its significance – the resolution of this problem being the key to the second Arcanum, "The P a p e s s e" ("The High Priestess"). For this is the arcanum of the twofoldness underlying consciousness – spontaneous activity and its reflection; it is the arcanum of the transformation of the pure act into representation, of representation into memory pictures, of memory pictures into the word, and of the word into written

characters or the book (paragraph).

"The Papesse" wears a three-layered tiara and holds an open book. The tiara is laden with precious stones, which suggests the idea that it is by way of three stages that the crystallization of the pure act descends through the three higher and invisible planes before arriving at the fourth stage – the book. For the problems that the symbol implies are: reflection, memory, word and writing; or, in other words – revelation and tradition, spoken and written or, to express it in a single word – GNOSIS (this is also the title given by ELIPHAS LÉVI as a heading for the second chapter of his "Dogme et rituel de la haute magie"; trsl. A.E. Waite, "Transcendental Magic. Its Doctrine and Ritual", London, 1968, which deals with the second Arcanum).

It is concerned with Gnosis and not at all with Science, since Gnosis is exactly what the card of the Papesse expresses both in its entirety and in its details, namely the descent of revelation (the pure act or essence reflected by substance) down to the final stage – or "book". Science, on the contrary, begins with facts (the "characters" of the book of Nature) and ascends from facts to laws and from laws to principles. Gnosis is the reflection of that which is above; science, in contrast, is the interpretation of that which is below. The last stage of Gnosis is the world of facts, where it becomes fact itself, i.e. it becomes book; the first stage of Science is the world of facts which it "reads", in order to arrive at laws and principles.

As it is Gnosis (i.e. Mysticism become conscious of itself) that the card symbolizes, it does not present the image of a scientist or a doctor, but rather that of a High Priestess or "Papesse" – the sacred Guardian of the Book of Revelation. As "the Papesse" represents the stages of the descent of revelation, from the small uppermost circle on her tiara as far as the open book on her knees, her position is in keeping with this – she is seated. For, to be seated signifies a relationship between the vertical and horizontal which corresponds to the task of outward projection (horizontal) (book) of the descending revelation (vertical – tiara). This position indicates the practical method of Gnosis, just as the standing "Magician" indicates the practical method of Mysticism. The "Magician" dares – this is why he is standing. The "Papesse" knows – this is why she is seated. The transformation from to dare to to know consists in the change of position from that of the "Magician" to that of the "Papesse".

The essence of pure Mysticism is creative activity. One becomes a mystic when one dares to elevate oneself – i.e. "to stand upright", then even more upright, and ever more upright – beyond all created being as far as the Essence of Being, the divine creative Fire. "Concentration without effort" is burning without smoke or crackling fire. On the part of the human being it is the act of daring to aspire to the supreme Reality, and this act is real and effective only when the soul is serene and the body completely relaxed – without smoke and crackling fire.

The essence of pure Gnosis is reflected Mysticism. In Gnosis, that which takes

place in Mysticism becomes knowledge. That is, Gnosis is Mysticism which has become conscious of itself. It is mystical experience transformed into higher K n o w l e d g e.

Now, this transformation of mystical experience into knowledge takes place by degrees. The first is the pure reflection or a kind of imaginative repetition of the experience. The second degree is its entrance into memory. The third degree is its assimilation in thought and feeling, in a manner where it becomes a "message" or inner word. The fourth degree, lastly, is reached when it becomes a communicable symbol or "writing", or "book" – i.e. when it is formulated.

The pure reflection of mystical experience is without image and without word. It is purely movement. Here consciousness is moved by the immediate contact with that which transcends it, with the trans-subjective. This experience is as certain as the experience belonging to the sense of touch in the physical world and is, at the same time, as much devoid of form, color and sound as the sense of touch. For this reason one can compare it with the sense of touch and designate it as "spiritual touch" or "intuition".

This designation is not quite adequate, but at least it has the merit of expressing the character of immediate contact, which is peculiar to the first stage of reflection of the mystical act. Here, mystical experience and Gnosis are still inseparable and are as one.

If we want to establish the relationship between, on the one hand this state of consciousness and the three states which follow it, and on the other hand the sacred name Y O D – H É – V A V – H É (יהוה; abbreviated YHVH), which is the summation of Jewish Gnosis or the whole Cabbala, we cannot do otherwise than to attribute it to the first letter – YOD. The letter YOD is a point with the tendency of the indicated projection: י. This corresponds admirably to the experience of "spiritual touch", which also is nothing other than a point signifying germinally within itself a world of potentialities.

"Spiritual touch" (or "intuition") is that which permits contact between our consciousness and the world of pure mystical experience. It is by virtue of this that there exists in the world and in the history of mankind a real relationship between the living soul and the living God – which is true religion. The source and the root of all religion is Mysticism. Without it religion and the entire spiritual life of humanity would be only a code of laws regulating human thought and action. If God signifies for man something more than an abstract notion, it is thanks to "spiritual touch" or Mysticism. It is the seed of all religious life – with its theology, rituals and practices. Mysticism is also the seed of Gnosis, which is esoteric theology, just as Magic is esoteric art and Occultism or Hermeticism is esoteric philosophy. Now, Mysticism is the Y O D of the "Tetragrammaton", just as Gnosis is the first H É, Magic is the V A V – or "child" of Mysticism and Gnosis – and Hermetic Philosophy is the second (final) H É, i.e. the summation of what is revealed. The last H É or Hermetic philosophy is the "book" which the "Papesse" holds on her knees, while the three layers of her tiara represent the stages of the descent of revelation from the mystical plane to the gnostic plane,

then from the gnostic plane to the magical plane and, lastly, from the magical plane to the philosophical plane – to the plane of the "book" or the "doctrine".

Just as "spiritual touch" is the "mystical sense", so there is a "gnostic sense", a "magical sense" and a special "Hermetic-philosophical sense". Full consciousness of the sacred name Y H V H can only be attained by the united experience of these four senses and the practice of four different methods. For the fundamental thesis of Hermetic epistemology (or "gnoseology") is that "each object of knowledge demands a method of knowledge which is proper to it". This thesis or rule signifies that one ought never to apply the same method of knowledge on different planes, but only to different objects belonging to the same plane. A crying example of ignorance of this law is "cybernetic psychology", which wants to explain man and his psychic life by mechanical, material laws.

Each mode of experience and knowledge when pushed to its limit becomes a "sense" or engenders a special sense. He who dares to aspire to the experience of the unique essence of Being will develop the "mystical sense" or "spiritual touch". If he wants not only to live but also to learn to understand what he lives through, he will develop the "gnostic sense". And if he wants to put into practice what he has understood from mystical experience, he will develop the "magical sense". If, lastly, he wants all that he has experienced, understood and practiced to be not limited to himself and to his time, he must develop the "Hermetic-philosophical sense", and in practicing it – he will "write his book".

Such is the law that YOD-HÉ-VAV-HÉ expresses concerning the process of transformation of mystical experience into tradition; such is the law of the birth of tradition. Its source is mystical experience: one cannot be a gnostic or a magician or a Hermetic philosopher (or occultist) without being a mystic. The Tradition is a living one only when it constitutes a complete organism, when it is the result of the union of mysticism, gnosis, magic and Hermetic philosophy. If this is not so, it decays and dies. And the death of the Tradition manifests itself in the degeneration of its constituent elements, which become separated. Then, Hermetic philosophy separated from magic, gnosis and mysticism becomes a parasitic "system" of "autonomous" thought which is, truth to tell, a veritable psychopathological "complex", because it "bewitches" or enslaves human consciousness and deprives it of its liberty. A person who has had the misfortune to fall victim to the spell of a philosophical system (and the spells of sorcerers are mere trifles in comparison to the disastrous effect of the spell of a "philosophical system"!) can no longer see the world, or people, or historic events, as they are; he sees everything through the distorting prism of the "system" by which he is possessed. Thus, a Marxist of today is incapable of seeing anything else in the history of mankind other than the "class struggle". What I am saying concerning mysticism, gnosis, magic and philosophy would be considered by him only as a ruse on the part of the bourgeois class, with the aim of "screening with a mystical and idealistic haze" the reality of the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie... although I have not inherited anything from my

parents and I have not experienced a single day without having to earn my living by means of work recognized as "legitimate" by Marxists!

Another contemporary example of possession by a system is Freudianism. A man possessed by this system will see in everything I have written only the expression of "suppressed libido", which seeks and finds release in this manner. It would therefore be the lack of sexual fulfillment which has driven me to occupy myself with the Tarot and to write about it!!

Is there any need for further examples? Is it still necessary to cite the Hegelians with their distortion of the history of humanity, the Scholastic "realists" of the Middle Ages with the Inquisition, the rationalists of the XVIII th century who were blinded by the light of their own autonomous reasoning?

Yes, the "autonomous" philosophical systems separated from the living body of Tradition are parasitic structures, which seize the thought, feeling and finally the will of human beings. In fact, they play a role comparable to the psychopathological complexes of neurosis or other psychic maladies of obsession. Their physical analogy is cancer.

With respect to "autonomous" Magic, i.e. Magic without Mysticism and without Gnosis, it necessarily degenerates into sorcery or, at least, into a pathological, romantic aestheticism. There is no "Black Magic", but rather sorcerers groping in the dark. They grope in the dark because the light of Gnosis and Mysticism is lacking. A Gnosis without mystical experience is sterility itself. It is just a religious ghost, without life or movement. It is the corpse of religion animated intellectually by means of scraps fallen from the table of the past history of humanity. A "Universal Gnostic Church"! My God, what can one say, what should be said, when one has a knowledge, however limited, of the laws of spiritual life governing all tradition?!

Passing on to Mysticism which has not given birth to Gnosis, Magic and Hermetic Philosophy — such a mysticism must, sooner or later, necessarily degenerate into "spiritual enjoyment" or "intoxication". The mystic who wants only the experience of mystical states without understanding them, without drawing practical conclusions from them for life, and without wanting to be useful to others, who forgets everyone and everything in order to enjoy the mystical experience, can be compared to a spiritual drunkard.

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So tradition can only live — as with all other living organisms — when it is a complete organism of mysticism, gnosis and effective magic, which manifests itself outwardly as Hermetic philosophy. This means to say simply that a tradition cannot live unless the <u>whole human being</u> lives through it, in it, and for it. For the whole human being is at one and the same time a mystic, a gnostic, a magician and a philosopher, i.e. he is religious, contemplative, artistic and intelligent. Everyone <u>believes</u> in something, <u>understands</u> something, <u>is capable of</u> something and <u>thinks</u> something. It is human nature which determines whether a tradition will live or die. And it is also human nature which is capable of giving birth to a complete Tradition and keeping it living. Because the four

"senses" – mystical, gnostic, magical and philosophical – exist, be it in potentiality or in actuality, in each human being.

Now, the practical teaching of the second Arcanum, "the Papesse", relates to the development of the "gnostic sense".

What is the "g n o s t i c s e n s e"? –

It is the c o n t e m p l a t i v e s e n s e: A contemplation – which is preceded by a concentrated meditation – commences the very moment that discursive and logical thought is suspended. Discursive thought is satisfied when it arrives at a well-founded conclusion. Now, this conclusion is the point of departure for contemplation. It fathoms the profundity of this conclusion at which discursive thought arrives. Contemplation discovers a world within that which discursive thought simply verifies as "true". The gnostic sense begins to operate when it is a matter of a new dimension in the act of knowledge, namely that of d e p t h. It becomes active when it is a question of something deeper than the question: Is it true or false? It perceives more the significance of the truth discovered by discursive thought and also "why this truth is true in itself", i.e. it reaches to the mystical or essential source of this truth. How does it arrive at this? By l i s t e n i n g in silence. It is as if one wanted to recall something forgotten. Consciousness "listens" in silence, as one "listens" inwardly in order to call to mind from the night of forgetfulness something that one formerly knew. But there is an essential difference between the "listening silence" of contemplation and the silence arising from the effort to recall. In this second situation, it is the horizontal – in time, past and present – which comes into play, while the "listening silence" of contemplation relates to the vertical – to that which is above and that which is below. In the act of recall, one establishes in oneself an inner mirror in order to reflect the past; when one "listens in silence" in the state of contemplation, one also makes consciousness into a mirror, but this mirror has the task of reflecting that which is above. It is the act of recall in the vertical.

There are, in fact, two types of memory: "horizontal memory", which renders the past present, and "vertical memory", which renders that which is above as present below, or – according to our distinction between the two categories of symbolism which were defined in the First Letter – the "mythological memory" and the "typological memory".

HENRI BERGSON is perfectly right when he writes of horizontal or mythological memory: –

> "The truth is that memory does not consist in a regression from the present to the past, but on the contrary in a progress from the past to the present." (Henri Bergson, "Matter and Memory"; trsl. N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer, London, 1911, p. 319)
> – and also: – "... pure memory is a spiritual manifestation. With memory we are in very truth in the domain of the spirit." (ibid., p. 320)

It is therefore the past which comes to us in the remembrance and this is why the act of recollection is preceded by a state of empty silence which plays the role of a mirror,

where the past can be reflected or, according to Bergson, where "the state of the brain continues the remembrance; it gives it a hold on the present by the materiality which it (acting as a "mirror") confers upon it." (ibid., p.320).

It is the same again for typological or "vertical memory". PLATO is also perfectly right when he says of the memory of the transcendent Self which can confer reminiscence upon the empirical self:-

> "Seeing that the soul is immortal and has been born many times, and has beheld all things both in this world and in the nether realms, she has acquired knowledge of all and everything... (thus) it would seem, research and learning are wholly recollection." (Plato, "Menon" 81, c,d; trsl. W.R.M.Lamb, London, 1924, p.303)

Here, likewise, that which is above, in the domain of the transcendent Self, descends to the plane of the empirical self, when there is created in oneself the empty silence which serves to mirror the revelation from above.

What is necessary, therefore, in order to obtain here in the realm of the state of waking consciousness the reflection of that which is above in the mystical domain?

It is necessary "to be seated", i.e. to establish an active-passive state of consciousness, or state of soul which listens attentively in silence. It is necessary to be "woman", i.e. to be in the state of silent expectation, and not in that of the activity which "talks". It is necessary "to cover with a veil" the intermediate planes between the plane whose reflection is expected and the plane of the state of waking consciousness where the reflection becomes actualized. It is necessary "to cover the head with a three-layered tiara", i.e. to apply oneself to a problem or question of such gravity that it bears upon the three worlds and on that which is above. Lastly, it is necessary "to have one's eyes turned towards the open book on the knees", i.e. to carry out a complete psychurgical operation in the aim of objectifying one's result, in the aim of "continuing the book of the Tradition", adding something to it.

Now, all these practical rules of Gnosis are found clearly indicated in the Card, "the Papesse". Here is a woman; she is seated; she wears a three-layered tiara; a veil is suspended above her to cover the intermediate planes that she does not want to perceive; and she is looking at an open book on her knees.

The "gnostic sense" is therefore "spiritual hearing", just as the "mystical sense" is "spiritual touch". This does not mean to say that the "gnostic sense" perceives sounds, but only that its perceptions are due to a consciousness analogous to that in the attitude of expectation and attention when one listens, and that the contact between the perceiver and the perceived is not so immediate as in "spiritual touch" or mystical experience.

It still remains to characterize the two other "senses" mentioned above, namely the "magical sense" and the "Hermetic-philosophical sense".

The "magical sense" is that of projection, while the "Hermetic-philosophical sense" is that of "synthesis". By "projection" is meant to put outwards, followed by detaching from oneself, the contents of the inner life – an operation similar to that which is

produced on the psychic plane in artistic creation and on the physical plane in giving birth.

The talent of the artist consists in this: that he can render objective — or project — his ideas and feelings so as to obtain a more profound effect on others than that of the expression of ideas and feelings by a person who is not an artist. A work of art is endowed with a life of its own. When a woman gives birth to a child, she gives birth to a being endowed with a life of its own, which detaches itself from her organism in order to start an independent existence. The "magical sense" also consists in the faculty of projecting outwards the contents of the inner life, which remain endowed with a life of their own. Magic, Art, and Giving Birth are essentially analogous and pertain to the same category of "projection" or exteriorization of the inner life. The Church dogma of the creation of the world "ex nihilo", i.e. the projection from "nothingness" of forms and matter which are conferred with a life of their own, signifies the divine and cosmic crowning of this series of analogies. The doctrine of creation "ex nihilo" is the apotheosis of magic. Its essential statement is, in fact, that the world is a magical act.

In contrast, pantheistic, emanationist and demiurgic doctrines deprive creation of its magical sense. Pantheism denies the independent existence of creatures; they live only as parts of the divine life and the world is only the body of God. Emanationism attributes only a transitory, and therefore ephemeral, existence to creatures and the world. Demiurgism declares that "ex nihilo nihil" ("out of nothing comes nothing") and teaches that there must exist a <u>substance</u> co-eternal with God, which God uses as <u>material</u> for his work of craftmanship. God is therefore not the Creator or magical Author of the world, but only its craftsman — He only forms, i.e. regroups and recombines, the material elements which are given to Him.

Here it is not a matter of considering the doctrine of creation "ex nihilo" as the <u>only</u> explanation of the world that we find around us, within us and above us. Because the world is vast and great, there is room and there are levels of existence for <u>all</u> modes of constructive activity which, taken all together, explain the world of our experience such as it is. What is it a question of here? It is to affirm with as much clarity as possible the thesis that the doctrine of creation "ex nihilo" is the highest possible expression of M a g i c, namely divine and cosmic Magic.

But if you ask me, dear Unknown Friend, if I believe that the creation of the world is only a magical act, without something preceding and without something following it, I reply to you: no, I do not believe this. A <u>mystical</u> act and a <u>gnostic</u> act "precede" in eternity the act of creation as a <u>magical</u> act; this is followed by the activity of formation by the demiurge, or the demiurgic hierarchies, who undertake the work of craftmanship — work which is essentially that of executive or <u>Hermetic-philosophical</u> intelligence.

The classical Cabbala furnishes us with a marvellous example of the <u>peace</u> possible between apparently rival doctrines.

In its doctrine of ten Sephiroth, it teaches first the Mystery of Eternal <u>Mysticism</u> - A I N - S O P H, the Unlimited. Then it expounds the <u>gnostic</u> doctrine of

eternal emanations from the womb of the Divine which precede – in ordine cognoscendi – the act of creation. They are the Ideas of God within God, which precede the creation – the latter being a conscious act and not impulsive or instinctive. Then it speaks of pure creation or creation "ex nihilo" – the act of the magical projection of the Ideas of the Plan of Creation, i.e. the Sephiroth. This creative, magical act is followed – in ordine cognoscendi, always – by the activity of formation in which the beings of the spiritual hierarchies participate, including man.

It is in this way that, according to the Cabbala, the world comes into being, that the world of facts or deeds known to us through experience becomes what it is.

Now, "'olam ha'assiah", the world of facts, is preceded by "'olam ha yetzirah", the world of formation or the demiurgic world; this is the product of "'olam ha beriah", the world of creation or the magical world which is, in turn, the realization of "'olam ha atziluth", the world of emanations or the gnostic world, inseparate and inseparable from God, who in his true essence is the Mystery of supreme Mysticism -- A I N - S O P H, the Unlimited.

It is therefore possible – and for us there is no doubt about it – to reconcile the diverse doctrines concerning the creation; it is only necessary to put each of them in its proper place, or to apply each to the plane which is proper to it. The Cabbala, through its doctrine of the Sephiroth, provides a wonderful proof that this is so.

Pantheism is true for the "world of emanations" ('olam ha atziluth), where there are only Ideas – within God and inseparable from Him; but Theism is true when one leaves the domain of uncreated eternity to pass on to the creation, meaning the creation of the "ancestors" or "archetypes" of phenomena that we know through our experience. And Demiurgism is true when we contemplate the world or plane of formation, or the evolution of beings with the aim of coming into conformity with their created prototypes.

But leaving aside the worlds or planes of formation, creation, emanation and divine-mystical essence, one can confine oneself solely to the plane of facts. Then Naturalism becomes true – within the limits of this plane, taken in isolation.

The establishing of the hierarchic order of these doctrines concerning the creation, which appear to be rival, has led us right into the domain of activity of the "Hermetic-philosophical sense" or the "sense of synthesis". This sense, corresponding to the second HÉ of the divine name YHVH, is essentially that of final summary or the vision of the whole. It differs from the "gnostic sense" – which corresponds to the first HÉ of the divine name – in that it summarizes or gives the synthesis of the differentiated whole, while the "gnostic sense" gives the reflection of the whole in its germinal state. The "gnostic sense" produces the first synthesis or the synthesis before analysis. The "Hermetic-philosophical sense", in contrast, produces the second synthesis or the synthesis after analysis. The work which is accomplished by means of this sense is not entirely creative. Rather, it is "demiurgic", a work of craftmanship, where one carries out the forming of a given material with the aim of giving it the form of its final

manifestation.

Since one finds in the Emerald Table formulas summarizing "the three parts of the Philosophy of the whole world" ("tres partes Philosophiae totius mundi"), and since these at the same time summarize the worlds of magical experience, gnostic revelation and mystical experience, we have given this sense the name "Hermetic-philosophical" sense, i.e. the sense of synthesis of the three worlds or higher planes in a fourth world or plane. It is the sense of synthesis operating in the vertical of the superimposed planes, i.e. it is "Hermetic". For Hermeticism is essentially the philosophy, based on Magic, Gnosis and Mysticism, which aspires to the synthesis of the diverse planes of the Macrocosm and Microcosm. When one summarizes facts on a single plane – for example those of biology – one uses the "scientific sense" and not the "Hermetic-philosophical sense". The scientific sense – which is generally known and recognized – summarizes the facts of experience on a single plane, in the horizontal. Hermeticism is not a science and will never be one. It can certainly make use of the sciences and their results, but by doing so it does not become a science.

Non-Hermetic contemporary philosophy summarizes particular sciences with the aim of fulfilling the function of a "science of sciences" – and has this in common with Hermeticism. But, in itself, it differs from Hermeticism, which aspires to summarize experience in all planes, which varies according to the plane where the experience takes place.

This is why we have chosen the term "Hermetic-philosophical" to designate the fourth sense, the "sense of synthesis".

It goes without saying that the characterization of the four senses – whose collaboration is necessary for a Tradition to live and not to degenerate – is sketched here in a very incomplete manner. But the two following Arcana:- "the Empress" and "the Emperor" – are of a nature such as to give greater depth and more concrete content to what we are setting forth, especially concerning the "magical sense" and the "Hermetic-philosophical" sense. For the third Arcanum of the TAROT, "the Empress", is the Arcanum of Magic and the fourth Arcanum, "the Emperor", is that of Hermetic Philosophy.

LETTER III

Meditation on the third Arcanum of the Tarot -- "The Empress" - "L'Impératrice"

Ecce ancilla Domini
Mihi fiat secundum verbum tuum
(Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord;
let it be to me according to your word.)
(Luke i, 38)

Dear Unknown Friend,

The third Arcanum, "The Empress", is that of sacred Magic.

Now, there are three kinds of magic:
Magic where the magician is the instrument of divine power– this is sacred Magic.
Magic where the magician himself is the source of the magical operation – this is personal magic.
Magic, lastly, where the magician is the instrument of elemental forces or other unconscious forces – this is sorcery.

The teaching of the third Arcanum – in view of the context of the Card and its place between the second and fourth Arcana – refers to divine or Sacred Magic.

All magic, including sorcery, is the putting into practice of this: that the subtle rules the dense – force, matter; consciousness, force; and the superconscious or divine, consciousness. It is this latter rulership that "The Empress" symbolizes. Her crown, scepter and shield (coat-of-arms) are the three instruments of the exercise of this power. The crowned head indicates the power of the Divine over consciousness; the right arm (according to the viewer of the Card), which bears a scepter topped by a cross mounted on a globe of gold, represents the power of consciousness over force; and the left arm, which carries a shield bearing an eagle, signifies the power of energy over matter or the volatile over the gross. The crown is the divine authorization of magic. It is only magic crowned from above which is not usurpatory. The crown is that which renders it legitimate.

The sceptre is magical power. It is by virtue of the sceptre that she is not impotent.

The shield bearing the eagle shows the aim of magical power; it is its emblem and its motto, which reads:- "Liberation in order to ascend".

And the steady throne on which "The Empress" is seated symbolizes the indisputable and inalienable place which belongs to magic in spiritual, psychic and natural life – thanks to divine authorization or the crown, to the reality of her power or the scepter, and to that which she has as her objective or the shield. This is the role of magic in the world.

Let us now consider in a more thorough way the crown, the scepter, the shield or coat-of-arms and the throne of the Empress, understood as the divine legitimacy, the

power, the objective and the role of m a g i c.

The crown of "The Empress" differs primarily from the tiara of "The High Priestess" of Arcanum 2 in that it has <u>two</u> levels instead of three. The dignity or function that it signifies or confers therefore has bearing upon two planes. Gnosis has a tiara because she has the task of carrying revelation through three planes as far as the "book" or tradition. Magic is crowned, since her task is the sublimation of Nature, as indicated by the shield or coat-of-arms with the eagle in flight, that "The Empress" holds instead of the book of "The High Priestess".

Joséphin PÉLADAN defined magic as "the art of sublimation of man"; no other formula is superior to his (cf. "Comment on devient mage", Paris, 1892, p.135). This is exactly the emblem – or aim – of magic, if one understands by "sublimation of man" that of human <u>nature</u>. Péladan had a very profound understanding of the emblem of magic: the shield with the eagle in flight. All his works bear witness to this. Together they represent a magnificent flight; they aim, as a whole and each taken individually, at the ideal of the sublimation of human nature. It is because PÉLADAN bore the emblem of magic: the flying eagle, that this is so. Isn't it to have the emblem of magic before one's eyes that one is invited "to throw the eagles of one's desires to the wind", because happiness "raised to the level of an ideal, freed from the negative aspect of oneself and of things ... is the sole triumph of this world"-?- ("Traité des antinomies", Paris, 1901, p.112). – It is this same emblem – the shield with the eagle – that PAPUS had in mind, in actual fact, when he defined magic :-

> "Magic is: <u>the application of the strengthed human will to accelerate the evolution of the living forces of Nature</u>" (Papus, "Traité méthodique de magie pratique", Paris, 3rd edition, p.10) -- and he preceded this definition by another: "-... <u>Magic</u> is the <u>science</u> of <u>Love</u>." (ibid., p.2).

For it is precisely "the accelerated evolution of the living forces of Nature" that the eagle of the <u>shield</u> of "The Empress" represents; "the science of LOVE" is the <u>scepter</u> of "The Empress", which represents the <u>means</u> by which the aim of magic is attained.

Now, if the shield signifies the "<u>what</u>?" and the scepter the "<u>how</u>?" of magic, the crown represents here the "by <u>what right</u>?".

Although magic has disappeared from the criminal codes of our time, the question of its legitimacy still persists as a moral, theological and also medical question. One asks oneself today, just as in the past, if it is morally legitimate to aspire, without talking of exercizing, to an exceptional power conferring us with dominion over our fellow beings; one asks oneself if such an aspiration is due, in the last analysis, to vaingloriousness, and if it is compatible with the role that all sincere and believing Christians reserve for divine grace, be it immediate or be it acting through the intermediary of guardian angels and the saints of God? One asks oneself, lastly, if such an aspiration is not unwholesome and contrary to human nature, religion and metaphysics, given the limits to which one can go with impunity

towards the Invisible.

All these doubts and objections are well-founded. It is therefore a matter not of refuting them, but of knowing whether there exists a magic which is free from these doubts and objections or, in other words, whether there exists a legitimate magic from a moral, religious and medical point of view.

As a point of departure, we shall take these words from the New Testament:

> "Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints that lived at Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him: "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed!" And immediately he rose."
> (Acts ix, 32-34)

Here is a spiritual act of healing whose legitimacy is beyond doubt: from a moral point of view, it is an act of pure charity; from a religious point of view, it is in the name of Jesus Christ and not the name of Peter himself that the healing is effected; from a medical point of view it is a perfect cure, without prejudice to physical or psychic health, that is denoted for the healer. That which establishes the indisputable legitimacy of the healing of Aeneas is, firstly, the aim of Peter's deed: to restore movement to the person who had been unable to move; secondly, it is the means by which the healing was accomplished: the word based on the essence of Jesus Christ; thirdly, it is the source of the deed: "Jesus Christ heals you!"

These are the three elements of sacred magic which render it legitimate and in which it is easy to recognize the three insignias of "The Empress" – the crown, the scepter and the emblem. For to give movement to the motionless is the liberating action represented by the eagle on the shield; to realize the healing solely through the spoken word is to put into play the scepter surmounted by the cross; to accomplish it in the name of Jesus Christ is to have the head crowned by the divine.

But, one could object, the healing of Aeneas has nothing to do with magic. It is a miracle, i.e. the action of God, and man is nothing here.

Was the apostle Peter there, therefore, for nothing? If this were true, why does he go up to Aeneas? Why is the divine action of healing not accomplished directly, without Peter as intermediary?

No, Peter was there for something. His presence and his voice were necessary in order that the healing could take place. Why?

This problem merits deep meditation, for it encloses the central mystery of the Christian religion, that of the Incarnation.

Indeed, why must the Logos, the Son of the Father, incarnate and become God-Man in order to accomplish the supreme work of Divine Magic – the Work of the Redemption?

In order to humble himself!? But, being God, he was humility itself. In order to participate in human destiny: human birth, life and death? But God who is love

participated, participates, and will always participate in human destiny -- He freezes with all those who are cold, He suffers with those who are suffering and He undergoes agony with all those who die. -- You know that in monasteries in the Near East, at a time when hearts were still beating on the foundation of the Divine Presence, the pronouncing of these words was taught as a miraculous cure for all afflictions and every suffering:- "Glory to your long-suffering, Lord!"

No, the work of the Redemption, being that of love, requires the perfect union in love of <u>two wills</u>, distinct and free, - divine will and human will. The mystery of the God-Man is the key of divine Magic, being the fundamental condition of the work of the Redemption, which is an operation of divine Magic comparable only to that of the creation of the world.

Thus miracles require <u>t w o</u> united wills! They are not manifestations of an all-powerful will <u>ordaining</u>, but are due to a new power which is <u>born</u> whenever there is unity between divine will and human will. Peter was therefore certainly there for something at the healing of Aeneas at Lydda. The divine will needed his will in order to give birth to the power which raised the paralyzed Aeneas from his bed. Such an action, where there is simultaneously an accordance of divine will and human will, is exactly what we mean by "sacred magic" or "divine magic".

Should one speak of "magic" when it is a case of a miracle? Yes, because there is a <u>magus</u> and the participation of his will is essential for the realization of the miracle. Peter goes up to Aeneas and it is he who utters the words which effect the healing. The participation of Peter is indisputable, for he was there as a <u>human magus</u>. Consequently, the use of the word "<u>m a g i s</u>" is quite justified, at least if one understands by "magic" the power of the invisible and spiritual over the visible and material.

But this was not "personal magic"; rather it was "divine magic" to which the healing of Aeneas was due. For Peter could do nothing if his will was not united with the divine will. He was fully conscious of this, and this is why he says to Aeneas: "Jesus Christ heals you". This means to say: "Jesus Christ really wants to heal you. Jesus Christ has sent me to you in order that I might do what he has said to me. As far as I am concerned, I am doubly happy to be able at one and the same time to serve my Master and to heal you, my dear brother Aeneas".

Here lies the meaning of the <u>two</u>-layered <u>crown</u> which the Empress wears.

It is to be able to be "doubly happy" to serve that which is above and that which is below. For the crown, just as the tiara, represents the power of <u>service</u>. It is service rendered to that which is above and service rendered to that which is below which constitutes the legitimacy of sacred Magic.

The magus in sacred Magic plays the role of the <u>last link</u> in the magical chain which descends from above, i.e. in order to serve as the terrestrial <u>point of contact</u> and <u>point of concentration</u> for the Operation conceived, willed and put into action from above. In fact, when one is this last link, one wears the <u>crown</u> of legitimate magic. And, let us say

it again, all magic that is not crowned in this way is therefore illegitimate.

Is the legitimate exercise of sacred Magic therefore reserved for the Priesthood alone?-

To this, I reply with another question: Is the love of God and of one's neighbor reserved for the Priesthood alone? Sacred Magic is the power of love, born of the union in love of divine will and human will. Now, Monsieur PHILIP of LYONS was neither priest nor doctor, but he healed sick people through a spiritual power which he said was not his but "from the Friend above".

The Priesthood includes numerous thaumaturgists – St. GREGORY, St. NICHOLAS and St. PATRICK – which is sufficient to convince us that sacred Magic is truly amongst the works of the Priesthood. How could it be otherwise, given that the administration of the Sacraments – these <u>universal</u> operations of sacred Magic – constitute the principal responsibility of the clergy and that the individual operations "decided above" are entrusted above all to those living in the atmosphere of the universal Sacraments? Is it not natural that he who participates each day in the mystery of the Transubstantiation is called, in the first place, to Sacred Magic?

The life and work of the holy priest of ARS leaves no doubt that the response is affirmative. The life and work of the holy priest of ARS shows us the loftiness and splendor of individual sacred Magic – <u>beyond</u> the universal sacraments – which is able to manifest itself in the life and work of a simple country parson!

But on the other hand, the life and work of Monsieur PHILIP of LYONS shows us the loftiness and splendor of individual sacred magic – <u>without</u> the universal sacraments – which is <u>able</u> to manifest itself in the life and work of a layman, born and raised in the country!

Love is active wherever it exists. It is everyone's vocation; it is no one's prerogative.

Thus it is clear from the preceding that gnosis due to mystical experience must precede sacred magic. This is the meaning of the crown that "the Empress" wears. Sacred magic is the child of mysticism and gnosis.

If it were not so, magic would be the putting into practice of <u>occult theory</u>. This applies only to personal or usurpatory magic. Sacred or divine Magic is the putting into practice of <u>mystical revelation</u>. The Master revealed to Peter what he had to do – inwardly and outwardly – in order to heal Aeneas at Lydda. It is here that the order of things in sacred Magic is given: firstly, <u>real</u> contact with the divine (mysticism), then the taking into <u>consciousness</u> of this contact (gnosis), and lastly the <u>putting into operation</u> or the execution of that which mystical revelation has made known as being the task to accomplish and the method to follow.

Personal or usurpatory magic follows, in contrast, the reverse order. Here it is the magician himself who studies occult theory and decides when and how to put it into practice. If he does so following the advice given by a master in magic, someone who has experimented in magic more than he has, the principle remains the same: it is always the human personality who decides the "what" and the "how". Thus PAPUS says in his

"Traité méthodique de magie pratique":-

> "What differentiates magic from occult science in general is that the first is a practical science, while the second is above all theoretical. But to want to do magic without knowing occultism is to want to drive a locomotive without having passed through a special theoretical school. One can envisage the result." (p.4) and then: "... Magic being a practical science demands preliminary theoretical knowledge, as with all practical sciences." (p.5)

And lastly:- ..." Magic, considered as a science of application, limits its action almost solely to the development of relationships existing between man and Nature. The study of the relations existing between man and the higher plane, the divine plane, in all its variations, relates more to theurgy than to magic." (p.142) (Paris, 3rd edition, pp.4-5,142)

Here is an entirely characteristic definition, which leaves nothing more to desire, of what we have designated as "arbitrary" or "personal magic". Magic of this sort does not include that which is higher than man: the divine plane. Here man is the sole master – as he is elsewhere in all the practical sciences.

> "As a general rule, the principal director in every operation is the human Will; the means of action, the implement used, is the astral or natural fluid, and the end to achieve is the realization (generally on the physical plane) of the undertaken operation." (PAPUS, "La science des mages", Paris, 1974, p.69)

but..." regarding ceremonial magic and naturalism, we can only condemn them as much as for their uselessness as for the formidable dangers that they contain and for the state of soul which they suppose.... In fact, one understands here, under this last designation (ceremonial magic), an operation where the human Will and intelligence ALONE are active, without divine concurrence." (PAPUS," Traité élémentaire de science occulte", Paris, 1888, pp.430-431)

"The formidable dangers" of arbitrary or personal magic have been described by all those who have had direct or indirect experience of this. Henry Cornelius AGRIPPA ("De Occulta Philosophia", vol. iii), Eliphas LÉVI ("Transcendental Magic. Its Doctrine and Ritual") and PAPUS have said sufficient to prove that arbitrary or personal magic is most dangerous.

For sacred or divine Magic, one risks only that it is inoperative, because of an error – which can be distressing – but it comprises no danger.

Before finishing here with the dangers of corrupt magic, I would like to add what is elaborated by Jean HERBERT in his preface to the French edition of Arthur AVALON's "Serpent Power", where he puts the reader on guard against the temptation of trying to practice the tantric method and evoking the "serpent power" or "kundalini", raising it up to the head, to the Sahasrara (crown) center:.." He who attempts this without being guided by an authentic master – which is almost certainly

> impossible in the Occident - will find himself in a situation quite analogous to that of a child whom one allows to play with all the drugs filling a pharmacy, or to walk with a lighted taper into a fireworks factory. Incurable heart problems, slow destruction of the spinal marrow, sexual disorders and madness await those who risk this." (Arthur Avalon, "La puissance du serpent"; trsl. J. Herbert, Lyons, 1959, Intro.)

Here is the bouquet of the "flowers of misfortune" which is offered to the beginner without a guru, or with a non-authentic guru!

Let us return to sacred Magic. Having characterized its "crown" or divine legitimacy, we should now consider its "scepter" or power.

The scepter of "The Empress" comprises three parts: a cross, a globe and a staff topped by a little bowl or bulb. The staff is narrower below, beneath where "The Empress" holds it, than above, where it supports the globe surmounted by a cross. The globe is divided into two by a belt or "equatorial zone". Thus it can be said that it is formed from <u>two cups</u>, one upside down, supporting the cross and turned downwards or or "below", the other turned upwards and supported by the staff, is open towards the "above". Now, the joining together of the cup surmounted by a cross and of another supported by a staff

- which constitutes the scepter of the Empress - is the symbolic expression of the method of the <u>realization</u> of the potentiality represented by the crown. <u>It is the union of two potential wills in the crown, become actual in the scepter</u>. The cup surmounted by the cross and turned downwards or "below" is the divine will, while the cup supported by the staff and turned upwards or "above" is the human will. Their active union is the scepter or the power of sacred Magic. This power results from the influx from the cross which flows from the upper cup into the empty lower cup and from there descends through the staff in order to be concentrated at its extremity as an "acorn" or a <u>drop</u>. Or to express it in other words: the Holy Blood from above concentrates itself and becomes a "drop" of human blood by the human word and action.

Perhaps you will say: but this is the Holy GRAIL, it is the mystical Eucharist of which you speak!

Yes, this is exactly to do with the Holy Grail or the mystical Eucharist. For it is there, and only there, that the power of sacred Magic resides. This power is, in the last analysis, that of twofold <u>sincerity</u> - divine and human - united in the human word or action. Because not one word or action is <u>truly</u> sincere when it is only cerebral, and when it is only cerebral then it is not a flow of vital blood. The more sincerity there is in the human word or action, the more there is the vital essence of blood. When it happens - and the Angels fall down in adoration when this occurs - that the human wish is in accord with the divine wish, the Holy Blood is then united to the vital essence of the human blood and the <u>Mystery of the God-Man is repeated</u>, and also the miraculous power of

the God-Man is reiterated. Here is the power of sacred Magic - or its scepter.

Dear Unknown Friend, do not think that I have only combined these things intellectually, after having read books on the Holy Grail and treatises of mystical theology on the sacrament of the Eucharist. No, I would never write of the mystery of Bleed as the source of sacred Magic -- - even if I "knew" these things - if I had not visited and returned many times to the Chapel of Holy Bleed at Bruges. There I have had the unsettling experience of the reality of the Holy Blood of the God-Man. It is this experience, with the effect of rejuvenating the soul - what am I saying!? - not only rejuvenating the soul, but even elevating it in the sense of the healing of Aeneas effected by St. Peter: "Rise, and make your bed!" - it is this experience, I say, which has revealed to me the mystery of the Holy Blood and the source of the power of sacred Magic. Do not let the personal character of what I am writing obscure this for you. I am an anonymous author and I remain so in order to be able to be more frank and sincere than is ordinarily permitted to an author.

The aim of sacred Magic, as we have said, is represented by the shield that "The Empress" holds in place of the book which "The High Priestess" holds. Sacred Gnosis has as its aim the communicable expression (or "book") of mystical revelation, while the aim of sacred Magic is liberating action, i.e. the restoration of freedom to beings who who have partially or totally lost it. The eagle in flight depicted on the shield signifies this emblem of sacred Magic, which could thus be formulated: "Give freedom to he who is enslaved". And this includes all the works mentioned by LUKE (vii, 21-22) :- "Jesus cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. And he answered them: Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them."

This is the aim of sacred Magic; it is nothing other than to give the freedom to see, to hear, to walk, to live, to follow an ideal and to be truly oneself - i.e. to give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, the ability to walk to the lame, life to the dead, good news or ideals to the poor and free will to those who are possessed by evil spirits. It never encroaches upon freedom, the restoration of which is its unique aim.

It is more than pure and simple healing which is the object of sacred Magic; it is the restoration of Freedom, including here freeing from the imprisonment of doubt, fear, hate, apathy and despair. The "evil spirits" which deprive man of his freedom are not at all beings of the so-called "hierarchies of evil" or "fallen hierarchies". Neither Satan, nor Belial, nor Lucifer, nor Mephistopheles have ever deprived anyone of his freedom. Temptation is their only weapon and this presupposes the freedom of he who is tempted. But possession by an "evil spirit" has nothing to do with temptation. It is invariably the same thing as with Frankenstein's monster. One engenders an elemental being and one subsequently becomes the slave of one's own creation. The "demons" or "evil spirits" of the New Testament are called today in psychotherapy

"neuroses of obsession", "neuroses of fear", "fixed ideas", etc. They have been discovered by contemporary psychiatrists and are recognized as <u>real</u> – i.e. as "parasitic psychic organisms" independent of the conscious human will and tending to subjugate it. But the Devil is not there to no avail – although not in the sense of direct participation. He observes the <u>law</u> – which protects human freedom and is the inviolable Convention between the hierarchies of the "right" and those of the "left" – and never violates it, as stands out in the example of the story of JOB. One need not fear the Devil, but rather the perverse tendencies in oneself! For these perverse human tendencies can deprive us of our freedom and enslave us. Worse still, they can avail themselves of our imagination and inventive faculties and lead us to creations which can become the scourge of mankind. The atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb are flagrant examples of this.

Man with the possible perversity of his warped imagination is far more dangerous than the Devil and his legions. For man is not bound by the Convention concluded between Heaven and Hell; he can go beyond the limits of the law and engender <u>arbitrarily</u> malicious forces whose nature and action are <u>beyond</u> the framework of the Law ... such being the Molochs and other "gods" of Canaan, Phoenecia, Carthage, ancient Mexico and other lands, which exacted human sacrifice. One has to guard against accusing the beings of the hierarchies of evil to their detriment of having played the role of Molochs, these being only creatures of the perverse collective human will and imagination. These are egregores, engendered by collective perversity, just as there exist the "demons" or "evil spirits" engendered by individuals. – But we have said enough about demons; the problem of "evil spirits" will be treated in a more detailed and profound way in the 15th Letter, dedicated to Arcanum <u>XV</u>.

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The <u>throne</u> on which "The Empress" is seated represents, as we have said, the role of sacred Magic in the world. It is its place in the world and in the history of the world; it is, lastly, its basis. In other words, it is that which attends it, desires it and is always ready to receive it. What is this?

In view of the liberating function of sacred Magic, it is all that which is deprived of liberty and is bound by necessity. Concerning this, St. Paul said:

> "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." (Romans viii, 19–23)

It is therefore the mineral, plant, animal and human realms of Nature – in a word, Nature in its entirety – which constitute the domain of sacred Magic. The reason for the

existence of sacred Magic stems from the Fall and the whole domain of the Fall – comprising fallen Nature, fallen man and the fallen hierarchies. These are the beings belonging to it who hope "with eager longing" to be "set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God".

How does sacred Magic operate towards this end? How, for example, does it deliver man?

The throne of "The Empress" has a back. It strongly resembles two wings, so that certain interpreters of the Tarot have seen "The Empress" as being winged. Others, however, see only a back. In view of the context of the Card, the meaning of the coat-of-arms bearing the eagle, the scepter surmounted by the cross, and the two-layered crown, could one not see the back here in the form of two petrified and immobilized wings, but which had once been genuine wings and which are again potentially so?

If this interpretation is accepted, not only would it reconcile the two apparently opposing points of view but also it would agree with all that the Card teaches about the sphere, the aim, the power and the legitimacy of sacred Magic: to give movement to the petrified wings; would this not be in accord with the liberating mission of sacred Magic and with the words of St. Paul?

Whatever it may be, this interpretation comprises the answer to the question as to the concrete mode of the liberating action of sacred Magic. It is in every way contrary to the action of constraint of false or personal magic. It sets in opposition to the action of hypnosis – the waking of the free will; and to suggestion – the deliverance from possession by fixed ideas and psychopathological complexes; it sets in opposition to evocation by necromancy – the ascent towards the deceased effected by the force of love; and to the means of constraint employed by ceremonial magic with respect to elemental beings (gnomes, undines, sylphs and salamanders) – the gain of their confidence and friendship by corresponding acts; it opposes to the procedures of the practical Cabbala, which have the aim of subjugating "evil spirits" (in the sense of the fallen hierarchies) – their Transformation into servants of their own accord by resistance to the special temptations of each of them. For they also are waiting "for the revealing of the sons of God", and this revealing signifies for them, in the first place, inaccessibility to their temptations. Resist the devil, and the devil will be your friend. A devil is not an atheist; he does not doubt God. The faith which he lacks is faith in man. And the act of sacred Magic with respect to such a devil is that of re-establishing his faith in man. The purpose of the trials of JOB was not to dispel the doubts of God, but rather those of the devil. Those doubts once dispelled, who was it then who labored to give to Job all that he had lost, if not the same being who had formerly deprived him of everything? Job's enemy became his voluntary servant – and "voluntary servant" means to say f r i e n d. Sacred Magic, finally, opposes to the fluidic transfusion of magnetism – the practice of taking upon oneself the illnesses and infirmities of others, according to St. Paul's precept:–

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians

vi, 2)

It is in this way that saints practice sacred Magic. They would not project their forces, their vitality or their fluids into someone else, but on the contrary would rather take from him that which was unhealthy in him. St. LIDVINA, for example, who never left her bed or her room for many long years, once smelt strongly of alcohol. At the same time the cure of an alcoholic was effected in the town (Schiedam) where she lived.

Having advanced this list of contraries, I do not have the intention of judging, still less of condemning – hypnosis, magnetism, suggestion, all evocation, ceremonial magic dealing with Nature, and practical Cabbala aspiring to the subjugation of "evil spirits". The sole aim here is to make clear that which differentiates sacred Magic from these practices. They can also serve the good. But sacred Magic can do nothing else than to serve the good.

Are there "grimoires" of sacred Magic? Yes, if one understands by "grimoire" an arsenal of arms or implements which one makes use of. This arsenal is composed of formulas, gestures, and figures reproduced by the gestures. But one must not choose them arbitrarily. The choice must be reserved either according to profound knowledge confirmed by revelation or otherwise to direct revelation confirmed subsequently by the knowledge of experience.

With regard to the arsenal of formulas, it is accessible almost entirely to everyone. For the principal source of the formulas of sacred Magic is the Holy Scripture, the Bible, comprising the Old and New Testaments. The Gospel according to St. John occupies a prominent place here, for it consists almost completely of magical formulas. Then come the three other Gospels and the Apocalypse (Book of Revelation). One also finds magical formulas in the Epistles and in the Acts of the Apostles. As for the Old Testament, one finds them above all in the Psalms, the Book of Genesis (Bereshith), Ezekiel and the other prophets. There are also the magical formulas in the liturgical ritual of the Church and in the written or oral tradition leading back to the saints and to the great mystics. Equally, the text of the Emerald Table belongs to the arsenal of formulas of sacred Magic.

Concerning the "silent" part (i.e. the gestures and figures reproduced by gestures) of sacred Magic, their choice must be in the same way either confirmed by revelation or indicated by it. They consist, as a rule, of the Ritual gestures employed by the traditional Church (Roman or Greek-Orthodox) and of gestures reproducing a certain number of geometrical figures. Thus it is necessary sometimes to kneel down, sometimes to be upright, sometimes to prostrate oneself; sometimes it is necessary to do the gesture of benediction, sometimes that of protection or that of liberation, etc.

These formulas and gestures are not secret, but one should not b e t r a y them. "To betray" does not signify to divulge them, to make them known to others; one does not betray a magical formula which is known to nearly everyone solely by the fact of making it known to others. But one betrays it when one uproots it from its proper, sacred ground and from the sacred context of the magical operation to which it belongs and when one brings it down to a lower plane, i.e. when one abuses it. It is the same as with the formulas by means of which consecration operates in the Mass. Everyone knows them, but they operate

only when they are pronounced in the sacred context of the Mass by a person who is alone legitimately authorized to do it. It is not secrecy which enables their operation; it is the context and it is the niveau of the operation, and it is the legitimacy of the operant or celebrant. Therefore one does not betray the formulas of consecration by printing them in the missals. But one certainly would betray them if one were to use them, as a layman, in an arbitrarily improvised or invented "mass". The mystery is protected in another way than the secret. Its protection is its light, while the protection of a secret is its obscurity. As for an arcanum, which is a middle degree between the mystery and the secret, it is the twilight which protects it. For it reveals itself and hides itself at the same time by means of symbolism. Symbolism is a twilight for arcana. Thus the Arcana of the Tarot are formulas rendered visible and accessible to everyone. They were entertaining in the past for thousands of people; they were used for telling fortunes by hundreds of people; a few experienced in them a revelatory effect. Court de GEBELIN was astonished by them; Eliphas LÉVI was captivated by them; PAPUS was inspired by them; others followed them and became subject to the strange and almost irresistible attraction of the Tarot - they studied it, meditated and commented upon it, and interpreted it, being stimulated, inspired and illumined by "something" in the Tarot which simultaneously reveals itself and hides itself in the twilight of its symbols. And ourselves? Where do we stand in relation to the Tarot? We shall have a sure knowledge of this after the XXII nd Letter, dedicated to the Minor Arcana of the Tarot. -

X X X X X X X

The throne on which "The Empress" is seated represents the second H É of the "Tetragrammaton" of sacred Magic, i.e. its manifested entirety; her crown corresponds to the Y O D, the scepter to the first H É and the coat-of-arms to the V A V of the Tetragrammaton. This is why we have defined the throne as "the role of sacred Magic in the world and in history". One could equally say that it is the phenomenon of the whole of sacred Magic as it has manifested itself, as it is manifesting itself, and as it will manifest itself in the history of mankind. It is its historical body which reveals its soul and spirit. By "body" I mean that which makes possible direct action in the world of facts. Thus the "arsenal" or store of magical formlas and gestures which one uses in the practical exercise of sacred Magic are part of its "body". The Rituals of its universal operations, destined to serve the whole of mankind, and transcending space and time, i.e. the seven sacraments of the Church, in so far as they are rituals, are equally part of its "body". Then those who have the mission or the ability to perpetuate the tradition of sacred Magic are likewise part of it. This body is like a tree which has a certain number of branches which bear many leaves, but whose roots are in heaven and whose top is turned downwards. It has only one trunk and a sap which nourishes and vivifies all its branches with their innumerable leaves.

Is this "the Tree of the Sephiroth" of the Cabbala? Or rather the

Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? Or, again, the Tree of Life? --

The fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil has had a triple effect: toil, suffering and death. Toil or work took the place of mystical union with God, which union (without effort) is the teaching of the first Arcanum of the Tarot, "The Magician". Suffering replaced the directly reflected revelation or Gnosis, whose direct revelation is the teaching of the second Arcanum of the Tarot, "The High Priestess". And death entered into the domain of Life or creative, sacred Magic, which is the teaching of the third Arcanum of the Tarot, "The Empress". For sacred Magic is that L i f e which was before the Fall. The Gnosis of the 2nd Arcanum is that Consciousness which was before the Fall. And the mystical Spontaneity of the 1st Arcanum is that relationship between man and God which was before the Fall. This primordial spontaneity gave the impulse and direction to evolution and the development of the human being. It was not the struggle for existence, described by Charles DARWIN a century ago, which was the fundamental directing impulse towards the ideal or aim of evolution before the Fall, but rather that state of being which we designate today by the term "mystical union". The principle of struggle or toil (effort) only came into play after the Fall. Similarly, suffering did not play the role of awakening consciousness before the time of the Fall; this role was then reserved for directly reflected revelation, or Gnosis. Neither did death then play the role of liberating consciousness, through the destruction of the forms which enclose it, that it has played since the Fall. Instead of the destruction of forms, their continual transformation took place. This was operated by the perpetual action of Life effecting the metamorphosis of forms, in conformity with changes in the consciousness using them. This perpetually liberating constructive action of Life was – and still is – the function of sacred or divine Magic. And it is this transforming function, opposed to the destructive function of death, that Moses' Genesis designates by the symbol of the "Tree of Life".

For the Fall changed the destiny of humanity – so that Mystical Union became replaced by struggle or toil, Gnosis by suffering and sacred Magic by death. This is why the formula announcing the Good News that the effects of the Fall can be overcome and that the way of human evolution can return to that of mystical union instead of struggle, that immediately reflected revelation or Gnosis can replace the teaching of the truth through suffering, and that sacred Magic or transforming life can take the place of destructive death – this is why, I say, this formula has the tenor of the following:

I AM the W A Y, the T R U T H, and the L I F E (John xiv, 6)

This formula is at the same time the summation of the first three Arcana of the Tarot, i.e. the arcanum of the true way or mystical Spontaneity, the arcanum of revealed

truth or Gnosis, and the arcanum of transforming life or sacred Magic.

Sacred Magic is therefore the Tree of Life, inaccessible to arbitrary foolhardiness, but manifesting itself in the whole history of mankind by the agency of those who know how to say, "Ecce ancilla Domini, mihi fiat secundum verbum tuum" (cf. Luke i, 38 "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word") or rather, "Ecce servus Domini, faciam secundum verbum tuum" ("Behold the servant of the Lord, I will do according to your word"). It manifests itself in human history by a miracle; namely, that human supra-biological life continues from century to century, from millennium to millennium, and its source does not dry up; that the sacred fire above the altars of hearts and the altars of stone is not extinguished from century to century, from millennium to millennium; that Goodness, Truth and Beauty do not lose their attraction from century to century; that, in spite of all, there is Faith, Hope and Charity in the World; that there are saints, sages, geniuses, benefactors, and healers; that pure thought, poetry, music, and prayer are not being engulfed by the void; that there is this universal miracle of human history; and that the miraculous exists. Yes, the miraculous does exist, for life is only a series of miracles, if we understand by "miracle" not the absence of cause (i.e. that it would not be caused by anyone or anything – which would be more the concept of "pure chance"), but rather the visible effect of an invisible cause, or the effect on a lower plane due to a cause on a higher plane.

Incomprehensibility is not at all the distinctive quality of a miracle; on the contrary, a miracle is often essentially more comprehensible than a so-called "natural" and "explained" phenomenon. It is, for example, more comprehensible that Teresa NEUMANN, in Bavaria, lived for decades without any food other than the host – in view of the fact that matter is only condensed energy and energy is only "condensed" consciousness – than the "well explained" fact of a single cell which, in multiplying itself by division, produces quite different cells for the brain, muscles, bones, hair, etc., which group themselves in such a way that the result is a complete human or animal organism. When someone tells me that all this is explained by heredity, that such are the "genes" contained within the first cell that it results in such an organism, then I nod in agreement, but I am completely hoodwinked.

The Tree of L i f e is the source of the miracles of generation, transformation, rejuvenation, healing and liberation. Conscious participation with it, "ad perpetranda miracula rei unius" as the Emerald Table expresses it, is the Great Work of sacred Magic.

One can understand the ideal of the Great Work when one compares it with the ideal of modern exact science. For the ideal of science is power – practical technical power and intellectual technical power. The intellectual aspect of the scientific ideal is to reduce the

multiplicity of phenomena to a limited number of laws and then reduce these to a single simple formula. It is a matter, in the last analysis, of mechanizing the intellect in such a manner that it calculates the world instead of understanding it. Then one would attain intellectual technical power.

The practical aspect of the scientific ideal is revealed in the progress of modern science from the XVIII th century to the present day. Its essential stages are the discoveries and putting into man's service, successively, steam, electricity, and atomic energy. But as different as these appear to be, these discoveries are based only on a single principle, namely the principle of the destruction of matter, by which energy is freed in order to be captured anew by man so as to be put at his service. It is so with the little regular explosions of petrol which produce the energy to drive a car. And it is so with the destruction of atoms, by means of the technique of neutron bombardment, which produces atomic energy. That it is a matter of coal, petrol or hydrogen atoms, is not important; it is always a case of the production of energy as a consequence of the destruction of matter. For the practical aspect of the scientific ideal is the domination of Nature by means of putting into play the principle of destruction or death.

Imagine, dear Unknown Friend, efforts and discoveries in the opposite direction, in the direction of construction or life. Imagine, not an explosion, but rather the blossoming out of a constructive "atomic bomb". It is not too difficult to imagine, because each little acorn is such a "constructive bomb" and the oak is only the visible result of the slow "explosion" – or blossoming out – of this "bomb". Imagine it and you will have the ideal of the "Great Work" or the idea of the Tree of Life. The image itself of the "Tree" comprises the negation of the technical and mechanical element. It is the living synthesis of celestial light and elements of the earth. Not only is it the synthesis of heaven and earth, it constantly synthesizes that which descends from above and that which ascends from below.

Now, the ideal of Hermeticism is contrary to that of science. Instead of aspiring to power over the forces of Nature by means of the destruction of matter, Hermeticism aspires to conscious participation with the constructive forces of the world on the basis of an alliance and a cordial communion with them. Science wants to compel Nature to obedience to the will of man such as it is; Hermeticism – or the philosophy of sacred Magic – on the contrary wants to purify, illumine and change the will and nature of man in order to bring them into harmony with the creative principle of Nature (natura naturans) and to render them capable of receiving its willingly bestowed revelation.

The Great Work, as an ideal, is therefore the state of the human being who is in peace, alliance, harmony and collaboration with Life. This is the "fruit of the Tree of Life".

But does not the Bible say that the approach to the Tree of Life is defended and that "at the east of the garden of Eden God placed the Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the Tree of Life" (Genesis iii, 24)?

Yes, it is defended, but the defense is not absolute and general; it is specific. Read what

the Bible says here:- Then the LORD God said: "Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live for ever..." (Genesis iii, 22).

Now, it is a matter here of defense against putting forth the hand and taking from the Tree of Life, and it is this and only this that the flaming sword of the Guardian of Eden prevents.

"Putting forth the hand and taking" - this is the motif, the method and the ideal of science. It is the will-to-power underlying the scientific attitude which is prevented by the flaming sword of the Guardian of Eden from repeating the act committed with respect to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. But the motif, method and ideal of Hermeticism is contrary to that of science. The will-to-serve underlies the fundamental Hermetic attitude. Instead of putting forward the hand to take, the human being opens his mind, his heart and his will to receive that which will be graciously bestowed upon him. The inspiration, illumination and intuition that he seeks are not so much conquests accomplished by his will; they are rather gifts from above, preceded by the efforts of the human will endeavoring to become worthy.

The flaming sword of the Guardian of Eden is a weapon of divine Magic. This means to say that it is essentially a "yes" and not a "no". It is essentially constructive and not destructive. In other words, it invites, encourages and directs all those who are worthy, all that which is worthy in each person, to the benefits of the Tree of Life; and it forbids, discourages and sends away all those who are unworthy, and also all that which is unworthy in each person. The flaming sword is a benediction to those who seek the Tree of Eternal Love which is the Tree of Life, and at the same time, by the very fact that it blesses, the flaming force prohibits those who seek the Tree of Life in order to take possession of its fruits. The sword of the Holy Guardian of Eden is always active in the spiritual life of humanity. It calls to seekers and it repulses thieves. Thanks to it Hermeticism, the millennial-old tradition of uninterrupted pursuit of the ideal of the Great Work, exists - in spite of all the chimera, all the illusions and all the forms of charlatanism, conscious and unconscious, which accompany this pursuit.

The sword of the Holy Guardian of Eden works the magical revelation of the Tree of Life - for everyone, without distinction. It is the magical word stirring ablaze in human souls ardent desire for the Great Work, the Miraculous Life. It "will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick" (Matthew xii, 20), because its mission is divine, and it is characteristic of the divine not only to save every droplet of sincerity and every spark of love, but also to make them grow and spread. Because in spite of all corruption that historical experience brings to the light of day, in totality nothing is corrupt. The traditional teaching of the Church that "natura vulnerata, non deleta" ("Nature is wounded but not destroyed") is absolutely true.

The Tree of Life is the unity or synthesis of consciousness, force and matter. Three is its number... because it reflects the unity of the Holy Trinity.

It is at the same time the unity of Mysticism, Gnosis and Magic. This is why one should not separate them. "The Empress", as a symbol of sacred Magic, contains within itself Gnosis and Mysticism - or "The High Priestess" and "The Magician". These Arcana are incomprehensible when one takes them separately. In general, all the Arcana of the Tarot are

comprehensible only when considered as a whole.

But it so happens that in human consciousness one separates the inseparable – in forgetting the unity. One takes a branch of the Tree and cultivates it as if it exists without the trunk. The branch can have a long life, but it degenerates. It is thus that in forgetting Gnosis and Mysticism, Magic has been taken separately which being a branch separated from its trunk, ceased to be sacred Magic and became arbitrary or personal magic. This latter mechanized to a certain degree and became what one understands as "ceremonial magic", which flourished from the time of the Renaissance until the XVIIth century. It was par excellence the magic of the humanists, i.e. it was no longer divine magic, but human magic. It no longer served God, but man. Its ideal became the power of man over visible and invisible Nature. Later, invisible Nature was also forgotten. Visible Nature was concentrated upon alone, with the aim of subjugating it to the human will. It is in this way that technological and industrial science originated. It is the continuation of the ceremonial Magic of the humanists, stripped of its occult element, just as the former is the continuation of sacred Magic, but deprived of its gnostic and mystical element.

What I am saying here is perfectly in accord with what PAPUS (and Eliphas LÉVI) thought, concerning which one cannot say that he was speaking without knowledge of the matter. For PAPUS said:–

> "Ceremonial Magic is an operation by which man seeks, through the play of natural forces, to compel the invisible powers of diverse orders to act according to what he requires of them. To this end he seizes them, he surprises them, as it were, in projecting, through the effect of correspondences which suppose the Unity of Creation, forces of which he himself is not master, but to which he can open extraordinary outlets... Ceremonial Magic is of an order absolutely identical to our industrial science. Our power is almost nothing alongside that of steam, electricity and dynamite; but in opposing them by appropriate combinations to natural forces as powerful as themselves, we concentrate them, we accumulate them, we compel them to transport or to smash weights which would annihilate us..." (Papus, "Traité élémentaire de Science Occulte, Paris, 1888, pp. 425-426)

What more is there to say? One can, perhaps, add another statement by PAPUS, defining the relationship between the "scientific mage" or occultist and the sorceror, as follows:–

> "The sorceror is to the occultist as the worker is to the engineer".
>
> (Papus, "La Science des Mages", Paris, 1974, p. 68)

The sorceror is therefore only an amateur occultist.

Just as contemporary technological science is the direct continuation of ceremonial magic, contemporary profane art is merely a continuation of Gnosis and Magic which have lost sight of mysticism and become separated from it. Because art seeks to reveal and applies itself to do this in a magical manner.

The ancient mysteries were only sacred art – being in the background conscious of Mysticism and Gnosis. But after forgetting this background or, so to say, after this background receded too far into the background, there remained a gnosis (or a

"revelationism") deprived at root of mystical discipline and experience. In this way "creative art" originated, and the Mysteries became theater, revelationary mantras became verses, hymns became songs, and revelationary "pantomimic" movements became dances, while cosmic myths gave way to belles lettres.

Art, being separated from the living organism of the unity of the Tetragrammaton, is necessarily removed from Gnosis as well as from sacred Magic – from which it springs and to which it owes its substance and the sap of its life. The pure revelation of Gnosis has become more and more a game of the imagination and the power of magic has degenerated more and more into aesthetics. Richard WAGNER understood this and wanted to remedy it. The work of WAGNER followed the aim of the reintegration of art – to effect reunion with Gnosis and Mysticism so that it becomes sacred Magic again.

Joséphin PÉLADAN endeavored to do the same in France. He even had dazzling success but this was short-lived – for reasons which he well understood subsequently. Silence is the indispensable climate for all revelation; noise renders it absolutely impossible.

The religious life, as everyone knows, is not exempt from decadence – when it ceases to be founded in Mysticism, illumined by Gnosis, and actuated by sacred Magic. It grows cold without the Fire of Mysticism, it clouds over without the light of Gnosis and becomes impotent without the power of sacred Magic. There remains then only theological legalism supported by moral legalism – hence the origin of the religion of the scribes and Pharisees at the time of the New Testament. This is the twilight which precedes its night – its death.

FAITH is the experience of the divine breath; HOPE is the experience of the divine light; and LOVE is the experience of the divine fire. There is no authentic and sincere religious life without faith, hope and love; but there is no faith, hope and love without mystical experience or, what is the same thing, without grace. No intellectual argument can awaken faith; what it can do, at best, is to eliminate obstacles, misunderstandings and prejudices, and thus help to establish the state of interior silence necessary for the experience of the divine breath. But faith itself is the divine breath whose origin is found neither in logical reasoning, nor in aesthetic impression, nor in human moral action.

The divine and flaming W e r d shines in the world of the silence of the soul and "moves" it. This movement is living faith – therefore real and authentic – and its light is hope or illumination, while all springs from the divine f i r e which is love or union with God. The three "ways" or stages of traditional mysticism – purification, illumination and union – are those of the experience of the divine breath or faith, divine light or hope, and divine fire or love. These three fundamental experiences of the revelation of the divine constitute the triangle of life – for no spirit, no soul and equally no body would be able to live if entirely deprived of all love, all hope and all faith. They would then be deprived of all vital élan (the vital élan advanced by Henri BERGSON as the general impulse behind evolution). But what else could this be but some form of love, hope and faith operating at the basis of all life? It is because "in the beginning was the Word" and "all things were made through him" (John i,3), and it is because the primordial Word still vibrates in all that lives, that the world still lives and has the vital élan

which is nothing other than love, hope and faith inspired from the beginning by the Creative Word.

In this sense BROWNING was right in having said, "Nature is supernatural". For its supernatural origin still manifests itself in its vital élan. To want to live! My God, what a profession of faith, what a manifestation of hope and what ardor of love!

Love, hope and faith are at one and the same time the essence of Mysticism, Gnosis and sacred Magic. F A I T H is the source of magic power and all the miracles spoken of in the Gospels are attributable to it. The revelation – all the revelations of Gnosis have only one aim: to give, to maintain and to increase H O P E. The book that "The High Priestess" holds on her knees is written so that hope may continue unceasingly. For all revelation which does not give hope is useless and superfluous. Mysticism is fire without reflection; it is union with the divine in L O V E. It is the primary source of all life, including religious, artistic and intellectual life. Without it, everything becomes pure and simple technique. Religion becomes a body of techniques of which the scribes and Pharisees are the engineers; it becomes legalistic.

A r t becomes a body of techniques – be they traditional or innovative – a field of imitation or experiences.

S c i e n c e, lastly, becomes a body of techniques of power over Nature.

But the Arcanum of sacred Magic, "The Empress" calls us to take another way. It calls us to the way of regeneration, instead of that of degeneration. It invites us to de-mechanize all that which has become solely intellectual, esthetic and moral technique. One has to de-mechanize in order to become a mage. For sacred Magic is through and through Life – that life which is revealed in the Mystery of the Blood. May our problems become so many cries of the blood (of the heart), may our words be borne by blood, and may our actions be as effusions of blood! This is how one becomes a mage. One becomes a mage by becoming essential – as essential as the blood is.

Eliphas LÉVI puts as the subtitle to the chapter devoted to the third Arcanum of the Tarot in his Transcendental Magic. Its Doctrine and Ritual : "Plenitudo Vocis". His choice is more than happy, it is inspired! Indeed! – "fullness of voice" – could one better describe the essence itself of sacred Magic!? Yes, it is "fullness of voice" with which sacred Magic is concerned; it is the voice full of blood; it is the blood which becomes voice. It is being in which there is nothing mechanical and which is entirely living.

The third Arcanum of the Tarot, being the Arcanum of sacred Magic, is by this very fact the Arcanum of generation. For generation is only an aspect of sacred Magic. If sacred Magic is the union of two wills – human and divine – from which a miracle results, generation itself also presupposes the trinity of the generator, the generant and the generated. Now, the generated is the miracle resulting from the union of the principles of generator and generant. Whether it is a matter of a new idea, a work of art, the birth of a child, is not important; it is always the same law of generation which operates; it is always the same Arcanum – that of fecundity – which is in play; and it is always the same mystery of the Incarnation of the Word which is the divine prototype here.

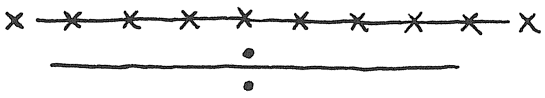
We have said above that sacred Magic is Life such as it was before the Fall. As life is always generative, the Arcanum of sacred Magic is at the same time that of generation before

the Fall – vertical generation, from a higher plane to a lower one – instead of horizontal generation, which is accomplished on a single plane.

The formula of this mystery is well known:- ET INCARNATUS EST DE SPIRITU SANCTO EX MARIA VIRGINE.

It contains the trinity of the Generator above, of the Generant below, and the Generated, -- or: the Holy Spirit, the Holy Virgin, and the God-Man. It is at the same time the formula of sacred Magic in general, because it expresses the mystery of the union of divine will and human will in the element of the blood. The blood – in its triple sense, mystical, gnostic and magical -- is the "scepter" or power of sacred Magic.

At this point, dear Unknown Friend, I shall withdraw and leave you alone with your A n g e l. It is not fitting that my human voice arrogates the right of uttering things which are a more profound continuation of what is outlined above.



Letter IV :-
Meditation on the fourth Major Arcanum of the Tarot-
"THE EMPEROR"--
"L'EMPEREUR"

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
(Luke xiii,35)

Dear Unknown Friend,

The less superficial a person is – and the more he knows and is capable of – the greater is his authority. To be something, to know something and to be capable of something is what endows a person with authority. One can also say that a person has authority in proportion to what he unites within himself of the profundity of mysticism, the direct wisdom of gnosis and the productive power of magic. Whosoever has this to a certain degree can found a "school". Whosoever has this to a still higher degree can "lay down the law".

It is authority alone which is the true and unique power of law. Compulsion is only an expedient to which one takes recourse in order to remedy a lack of authority. Where there is authority, i.e. where there is present the breath of sacred Magic filled by the rays of light of Gnosis emanated from the profound fire of Mysticism, there compulsion is superfluous.

Now, "The Emperor" of the fourth Arcanum of the Tarot does not have a sword or any other weapon. He rules by means of the scepter, and by the scepter alone. This is why the first idea that the Card naturally evokes is that of the authority underlying law. The thesis which proceeds from meditation on the three preceding Arcana is that all authority has its source in the divine Ineffable Name Y H V H and that all law derives from this.

The implication here is that the human bearer of true authority does not replace divine authority but, on the contrary, cedes his place to it. He has to renounce something to this end.

The Card teaches us in the first instance that "The Emperor" has renounced compulsion and violence. He has no weapons. His right hand holds the scepter forward, on which his gaze is fixed, and his left hand holds his tightly-fastened belt. He is neither standing nor sitting. He is simply leaning back against a lowered throne and has only one foot placed on the ground. His legs are crossed. The shield adorned with an eagle rests on the ground at his side. Lastly, he is wearing a large and heavy crown.

The context of the Card expresses active renunciation rather than the renunciation of constraint alone. The Emperor has renounced ease, being not seated. He has renounced walking, being in a leaning position and having his legs crossed. He may neither advance in order to take the offensive, nor move back in order to retreat. His station is by his seat and his coat-of-arms. He is on sentry-duty and as such he does not have freedom of movement. He is a guardian bound to his post.

What he guards is fundamentally the Scepter. Now the scepter is not an implement with which one is empowered to do something or other. It is, from a practical point of view, a symbol serving nothing. The Emperor has therefore renounced all action having pledged his right hand to the scepter that he holds before him, whereas his left hand holds his fastened belt.

It is no longer free, because the Emperor restrains himself with it. It serves the function of holding the impulsive and instinctive nature of the Emperor in check, so that it does not intervene and divert him from his post as guardian.

The Emperor has therefore renounced movement by means of his legs and action by means of his arms. At the same time, he wears a large and heavy Complete (Entire) crown — and we have already meditated on the meaning of the crown with regard to that of "The Empress", which has a double meaning. It is the sign of legitimacy, on the one hand, but it is also the sign of a task or a mission by which the crown is charged from above. Thus every crown is essentially a crown of thorns. Not only is it heavy, but also it calls for a painful restraint with regard to the thought and free or arbitrary imagination of the personality. It certainly emits rays outwards, but these same rays become thorns for the personality within. They play the role of nails piercing and crucifying each thought or image of the personal imagination. Here true thought receives confirmation and subsequent illumination; false or irrelevant thought is rivetted and reduced to impotence. The crown of the Emperor signifies the renunciation of freedom of intellectual movement, just as his arms and legs signify his renunciation of freedom of action and movement. He is deprived of the three so-called "natural" liberties of the human being — those of opinion, word and movement. Authority demands this.

But this is not all. The shield bearing an eagle rests on the ground at his side. The Emperor does not hold it with his hand, as the Empress does. The shield is certainly there, but it belongs rather to the throne than to the person of the Emperor. This means to say that the purpose for which the Emperor is on sentry-duty is not his but that of the throne. The Emperor does not have a personal mission; he has renounced this in favor of the throne. Or, in esoteric terms, he has no name; he is anonymous, because the name — the mission — belongs to the throne. He is not there in his own name but rather in the name of the throne. This is the fourth renunciation of the Emperor — the renunciation of a personal mission or a name, in the esoteric meaning of the word.

It is said that "Nature has a horror of emptiness" (horror vacui). The spiritual counter-truth here is that, "the Spirit has a horror of fullness". It is necessary to create a natural emptiness — and this is what renunciation achieves — in order for the spiritual to manifest itself. The beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew v, 3-12) state this fundamental truth. The first beatitude — "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!" — means to say that those who are rich in spirit, who are filled with the "spiritual kingdom of man", have no room for the "kingdom of heaven". Revelation presupposes emptiness — space put at its disposal — in order to manifest itself. This is why it is necessary to renounce personal opinion in order to receive the revelation of the truth, personal action in order to become an agent for sacred Magic, the way (or method) of personal development in order to be guided by the Master of ways, and one's personally chosen mission in order to be charged with a mission from above.

The Emperor has established in himself this fourfold emptiness. This is why he is "Emperor"; this is why he is Authority. He has made a place in himself for the Divine

Name Y H V H, which is the source of authority. He has renounced personal intellectual initiative – and the emptiness which results is filled by divine initiative or the Y O D of the sacred name. He has renounced action and movement – and the void which results is filled by revelationary action and magical movement from above, i.e. by the H É and V A V of the divine name. Finally, he has renounced his personal mission, he has become anonymous – and the emptiness which results is filled with <u>authority</u> (or the second H É of the divine name), i.e. he becomes the source of <u>law</u> and <u>order</u>.

Lao Tzu reveals the arcanum of <u>Authority</u> in his TAO TE CHING. He says:-

" Thirty spokes unite in one nave, and because of the part where n o t h i n g exists we have the use of a carriage wheel. Clay is molded into vessels, and because of the space where n o t h i n g exists we are able to use them as vessels. Doors and windows are cut out in the walls of a house, and because they are e m p t y spaces, we are able to use them. Therefore, on the one hand we have the benefit of existence, and on the other, we make use of non-existence " (XI). And again :-- " Be humble, and you will remain entire. Be bent, and you will remain straight. Be vacant, and you will remain full. Be worn, and you will remain new. He who has little will receive. He who has much will be embarrassed. Therefore the Sage keeps to One (Unity) and becomes the standard for the World. He does not display himself; therefore he shines. He does not approve himself; therefore he is noted. He does not praise himself; therefore he has merit. He does not glory in himself; therefore he excels. And because he does not compete; therefore no one in the world can compete with Him " (XXII) (Lao Tzu, "Tao Te Ching"; trsl. Ch'u Ta-Kao, London, 1953, p.23 and p.34)

. . . because he has Authority.

God governs the world by authority, and not by force. If this were not so, there would be neither freedom nor law in the world; and the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer (Pater Noster) : "Sanctificetur Nomen tuum. Adveniat Regnum tuum. Et fiat Voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra", would lose all meaning. He who prays these petitions does so solely with the purpose of affirming and increasing divine <u>authority</u> and not divine power. The God who is almighty – not virtually but actually – has no need at all to be petitioned that his reign may come and that his will may be done. The meaning of this prayer is that God is almighty only in so far as his authority is freely recognized and accepted. Prayer is the act of such recognition and acceptance. One is free to be believing or unbelieving. Nothing and no one can compel us to have faith – no scientific discovery, no logical argument, no physical torture can force us to believe, i.e. to freely recognize and accept the <u>authority</u> of God. But on the other hand, once this authority is recognized and accepted, the powerless becomes powerful. Then divine power <u>can</u> manifest itself – and this is why

it is said that a grain of faith is sufficient to move mountains.

Now, the problem of authority is at the same time of mystical, gnostic, magical and Hermetic significance. It comprises the Christian mystery of Crucifixion and the "mystery of Withdrawal" (Sod hatzimtzum) of the Lurianic Cabbala. Here are some considerations which can help us to arrive at a most profound meditation upon this mystery.

The Christian world worships the Crucifix, i.e. the image expressing the paradox of almighty God reduced to a state of extreme powerlessness. And it is in this paradox that one sees the highest revelation of the Divine in the whole history of mankind. One sees there the most perfect revelation of the God-of-Love (Dieu-Amour). "Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est" ("For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried") says the Christian creed. The only Son of the eternal Father nailed to the cross for our sake – this is what is divinely impressed upon all open souls, including the robber crucified to the right. This impression is unforgettable and inexpressible. It is the immediate breath of the Divine which has inspired and still inspires thousands of martyrs, confessors of the faith, virgins and recluses.

But it is not so that every human being finding himself facing the Crucifix may be thus divinely moved. There are those who react in the opposite way. It was so at the time of Calvary; it is so today.

> "And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying:... If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!" (Matthew xxvii, 39-40)

The chief sacrificers, with the scribes and elders, also mocked him, saying:- "He saved others; he cannot save himself! If he is king of Israel, let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he loves him!" (Matthew xxvii, 42-43)

This is the other reaction. Nowadays we encounter exactly the same, for example, in Soviet radio broadcasts from Moscow. The argument from Moscow is always the same: if God exists, he must know that we, the communists, dethrone him. Why does he not give a visible sign, if not of his power, at least of his existence? Why does he not defend his own interests!? -- This is in other words the old argument: - come down from the cross, and we will believe in you.

I cite these well-known things because they reveal a certain dogma underlying them. It is the dogma or philosophical principle which states that "truth and power are identical; that which is powerful is true and that which is powerless is false". According to this dogma or philosophical principle (which has become that of modern technological science) power is the absolute criterium and supreme ideal of truth. Only that which is powerful is of the divine.

Now there are open and secret worshippers of the idol of power (for it is an idol and the source of all idolatry) – also in Christian factions or in religious and spiritual circles in general. I am not speaking about Christian or spiritually-minded princes

or politicians who covet power, but rather about the adherents to doctrines advancing the primacy of power. Here there are two categories: those who aspire to the ideal of the "superman", and those who believe in a God who is actually almighty and therefore responsible for all that happens.

Amongst esotericists, occultists and magicians there are many – be it openly or secretly – who aspire to the ideal of the superman. In the meantime, they often pose as masters or high-priests worthy of the acclaim of the future superman. They are, at the same time, singularly in agreement in that they raise God far, very far, to the heights of Absolute Abstraction so that he does not discomfort them by his too-concrete presence, and in order that they have room for themselves to be able to develop their own greatness without the rival grandeur of the Divine to discomfort them. They build their individual towers of Babel which fall, as a rule, according to the law of all towers of Babel, and experience, sooner or later, a salutary fall, as is the teaching of Card XVI of the Tarot. They do not fall from a real height into a real abyss; it is only from an imaginary height that they fall and they fall only to the ground; i.e. they learn the lesson that we human beings of today have all learned or have still to learn.

The worship of the idol of power conceived of as the "superman", above all when one identifies oneself with it, is relatively inoffensive – being, fundamentally, infantile. But this is not so with the other category of power worshippers, namely those who project this ideal onto God himself. Their faith in God depends only on the power of God; if God was powerless, they would not believe in him. It is they who teach that God has created souls predestined to eternal damnation and others predestined to salvation; it is they who make God responsible for the entire history of the human race, including all its atrocities. God, they say, "chastises" his disobedient children by means of wars, revolutions, tyrannies and other similar things. How could it be otherwise? God is almighty, therefore all that happens is only able to happen through his action or with his consent.

The idol of power has such a hold on some human minds that they prefer a God who is a mixture of good and evil, provided that he is powerful, to a God-of-Love who governs only by the intrinsic authority of the divine – by truth, beauty and goodness – i.e. they prefer a God who is actually almighty to the crucified God.

However the Father in the parable of the prodigal child had neither sent his son far from his paternal home in order to lead a life of debauchery, nor had he prevented him from leaving and forced him to lead a life which was pleasing to him (the father). All he did was to a w a i t his return and to go and meet him when the prodigal son was approaching his Father's home. Everything which took place in the story of the prodigal son, save for his return to the Father, was clearly contrary to the will of the Father.

Now the history of the human race since the Fall is that of the prodigal son. It is not a matter of "the law of involution and evolution according to the divine plan" of modern Theosophists, but rather of an abuse of freedom similar to that of the prodigal son. And the key formula of the history of humanity is to be found neither in the progress of

civilization nor in the process of evolution or in any other "process", but rather in the parable of the prodigal son, in the words:

> "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants". (Luke xv,18-19)

Is mankind therefore solely responsible for its history? Without a doubt -- because it is not God who has willed it to be as such. God is crucified in it.

One understands this when one takes account of the significance of the fact of human freedom, and likewise the freedom of the beings of the spiritual hierarchies – the Angels, Archangels, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Dominions, Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim. All these beings – including man (the Ischim) – have an existence that is either real or illusory. If they have a <u>real</u> existence, if they are not a mirage, they are independent entities endowed not only with a <u>phenomenal</u> independence but also a <u>noumenal</u> independence. Now, noumenal independence is what we understand by <u>freedom</u>. Freedom, in fact, is nothing other than the real and complete existence of a being created by God. To be free and to exist are synonymous from a moral and spiritual point of view. Just as morality would not exist without freedom, so would an unfree spiritual entity – soul or spirit – not exist for itself, but would be part of another spiritual entity which is free, i.e. which really exists. Freedom is the spiritual existence of beings.

When we read in Scripture that God created all beings, the essential meaning here is that God has given freedom – or existence – to all beings. Freedom once having been given, God does not take it back. This is why the beings of the ten hierarchies mentioned above are <u>immortal</u>. Death -- not separation from the body, but <u>real</u> death – would be the <u>absolute</u> deprivation of liberty, i.e. complete destruction of the existence given by God. But who or what can take the divine gift of freedom, the divine gift of existence, from a being? Freedom, existence, is <u>inalienable</u>, and the beings of the ten hierarchies <u>are</u> immortal. The statement: freedom or existence is inalienable, can be understood as the highest <u>gift</u>, the very greatest value imaginable – then this would be a foretaste of Paradise; or as <u>condemnation</u> to "perpetual existence" – then this would be a foretaste of Hell. Because no one "sends" us anywhere – freedom not being a theater. It is we ourselves who make the choice. Love existence, and you have chosen Heaven; hate it, and there you have chosen Hell.

Now, God is with respect to free beings either the ruling King (in the sense of authority such as that taught by the IVth Arcanum of the Tarot) or the Crucified. He is King with regard to those of his beings who voluntarily accept (who "believe") His authority; he is Crucified with respect to those beings who abuse their freedom and "worship idols", i.e. who replace divine authority by a substitute.

King and Crucified at one and the same time – this is the mystery of Pilate's inscription on the cross at Calvary: I e s u s N a z a r e n u s R e x J u d a e o r u m (cf. John xix, 19: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews").

Almighty and powerless, both at once – this is why miracles of healing in human history were able to be accomplished by saints while bloody wars and disasters raged around them!

Freedom – freedom is the true throne of God and is his cross at the same time. Freedom is the key to comprehension of the role of God in history – to comprehension of the God-of-Love and the God-King, without the sacrilege of making him a tyrant and without the blasphemy of doubting his power or of doubting his very existence... God is all-powerful in history in as much as there is faith; and He is crucified in so far as one turns away from Him.

Thus, divine Crucifixion follows from the fact of freedom or the fact of the real existence of the beings of the ten hierarchies, when it is a matter of a world governed by divine authority and not by compulsion.

Let us turn now to the idea Tzimtzum – the "withdrawal of God" – of the Lurianic school of the Cabbala. The doctrine of Tzimtzum reveals one of the "three mysteries" of the Cabbala :- Sod Hajichud, the mystery of union; Sod Hatzimtzum, the mystery of concentration or divine withdrawal; Sod Hagilgul, the mystery of reincarnation or the revolution of souls. The two other "mysteries" – the mystery of union and that of the revolution of souls – will be treated later, in other Letters (Letter X, for example). Concerning the "mystery of divine withdrawal (or concentration)" which interests us here, it is a question of the thesis that the existence of the universe is rendered possible by the act of contraction of God within Himself. God made a "place" for the world in abandoning a region interior to Himself.

> "The first act of En-Soph, the Infinite Being, is therefore not a step outside but a step inside, a movement of recoil, of falling back upon oneself, of withdrawing into oneself. Instead of emanation we have the opposite, contraction" (Gershom G. SCHOLEM, "Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism", London, 1955, p.261).. "The first act of all is not an act of revelation but one of limitation. Only in the second act does God send out a ray of His light and begin His revelation, or rather His unfolding as God the Creator, in the primordial space of His own creation. More than that, every new act of emanation and manifestation is preceded by one of concentration and retraction." (ibid., p.261)

In other words, in order to create the world ex nihilo, God had first to bring the void itself into existence. He had to withdraw within in order to create a mystical space, a space without his presence – the void.

And it is in thinking this thought that we assist at the birth of Freedom. For, as BERDYAEV has formulated it –

> "Freedom is not determined by God; it is part of the nothing out of which God created the world." (Nicholas Berdyaev, "The Destiny of Man", London, 1937, p.33)

The void – the mystical space from which God withdrew himself through his act of Tzimtzum – is the place of origin of freedom, i.e. the place of origin of an ex-istence which is absolute potentiality, not in any way determined. And all of the beings of the ten created hierarchies are the children of God and Freedom – born of divine Plenitude

and the void. They carry within themselves a "drop" of the void and a spark of God. Their existence, their freedom, is the void within them. Their essence, their spark of Love, is the divine "blood" within them. They are immortal, because the void is indestructible, and the monad proceeding from God is also indestructible. Further, these two indestructible elements – the meonic (μὴ ὄν – me on, void) element and the pleromic (πλήρωμα – pleroma, plenitude) element – are indissolubly bound to one another.

Now, the idea of Tzimtzum, the withdrawal of God in order to create freedom, and that of divine Crucifixion on account of freedom, are in complete accordance. For the withdrawal of God in order to make a space for freedom and his renunciation of the use of his power against the abuse of freedom (within determined limits) are only two aspects of the same idea.

It goes without saying that the idea of Tzimtzum (and that of divine Crucifixion) is inapplicable when God is conceived of in the sense of pantheism. Pantheism, like materialism, does not admit the real existence of individual beings. Therefore the fact of freedom – not merely apparent freedom – is excluded. For pantheism and materialism there is no question – and cannot be – of a divine withdrawal or a divine crucifixion. On the other hand, the Cabbalistic doctrine of Tzimtzum is the only serious explanation that I know of concerning creation ex nihilo which is of a kind to act as a counterbalance to pure and simple pantheism. Moreover, it constitutes a deep link between the Old and New Testament, in bringing to light the cosmic significance of the idea of Sacrifice.

Now, the reflection of the idea of divine Withdrawal and divine Crucifixion is found to be indicated, as we have seen, in the IVth Arcanum of the Tarot, the Emperor. The Emperor reigns by pure authority; he reigns over free beings, i.e. not by means of the sword, but by means of the scepter. The scepter itself bears a globe with a cross above. The scepter therefore expresses in as clear as possible a manner the central idea of the Arcanum: just as the world (the globe) is ruled by the cross, so is the power of the Emperor over the terrestrial globe subject to the sign of the cross. The power of the Emperor reflects divine power. And just as the latter is effected by divine contraction (Tzimtzum) and by voluntary divine powerlessness (Crucifixion), so the power of the Emperor is effected by the contraction of his personal forces (the belt drawn tight by the Emperor) and by voluntary immobility (the crossed legs of the Emperor) at his post (the seat or throne of the Emperor).

The post of the Emperor... What an abundance of ideas concerning the post -- its historical mission, its functions in the light of natural right, and its role in the light of divine right – of the Emperor of Christendom are to be found amongst medieval authors!

As it is suitable that the institution of a City or a kingdom be made according to the model of the institution of the world, similarly it is necessary to draw from (divine) government the order (ratio) of the government (of a city) – this is the fundamental thesis advanced on the subject by St. Thomas AQUINAS ("De Regno" xiv, 1). This is why authors of the Middle Ages could not imagine Christianity without an Emperor, just as they

could not imagine the Universal Church without a Pope. Because if the world is governed hierarchically, Christianity or the Sanctum Imperium cannot be otherwise. Hierarchy is a pyramid which exists only when it is complete. And it is the Emperor who is at its summit. Then come the kings, dukes, noblemen, citizens and peasants. But it is the crown of the Emperor which confers royalty to the royal crowns from which the ducal crowns and all the other crowns in turn derive their authority.

The post of the Emperor is nevertheless not only that of the last (or, rather, the first) instance of sole legitimacy. It was also magical, if we understand by magic the action of correspondences between that which is below and that which is above. It was the principle itself of authority from which all lesser authorities derived not only their legitimacy but also their hold over the consciousness of the people. This is why royal crowns one after another lost their lustre and were eclipsed after the imperial crown was eclipsed. Monarchies are unable to exist for long without the Monarchy; kings cannot apportion the crown and scepter of the Emperor among themselves and pose as emperors in their particular countries, because the shadow of the Emperor is always present. And if in the past it was the Emperor who gave luster to the royal crowns, it was later the shadow of the absent Emperor which obscured the royal crowns and, consequently, all the other crowns – those of dukes, princes, counts, etc. A pyramid is not complete without its summit; hierarchy does not exist when it is incomplete. Without an Emperor, there will be, sooner or later, no more kings. When there are no more kings, there will be, sooner or later, no more nobility. When there is no more nobility, there will be, sooner or later, no more bourgeoisie or peasants. This is how one arrives at the dictatorship of the proletariat, the class hostile to the hierarchical principle, which latter, however, is the reflection of the divine order. This is why the proletariat professes atheism.

Europe is haunted by the shadow of the Emperor. One senses his absence just as vividly as in former times one sensed his presence. Because the emptiness of the wound speaks, that which we miss knows how to make us sense it.

Napoleon, eyewitness to the French Revolution, understood the direction which Europe had taken – the direction towards the complete destruction of hierarchy. And he sensed the shadow of the Emperor. He knew what had to be restored in Europe, which was not the royal throne of France – because kings cannot exist for long without the Emperor – but rather the imperial throne of Europe. So he decided to fill the gap himself. He made himself Emperor and he made his brothers kings. But it was to the sword that he took recourse. Instead of ruling by the scepter – the globe bearing the cross – he made the decision to rule by the sword. But, "all who take up the sword will perish by the sword" (Matthew xxvi, 52). Hitler also had the delirium of desire to occupy the empty place of the Emperor. He believed he could establish the "thousand-year Empire" ("das tausendjährige Reich") of tyranny by means of the sword. But again – "all those who live by the sword will perish by the

sword".-

No, the post of the Emperor does not belong any longer either to those who desire it or to the choice of the people. It is reserved to the choice of heaven alone. It has become occult. And the crown, the scepter, the throne and the coat-of-arms of the Emperor are to be found in the catacombs. In the catacombs – this means to say: under absolute protection.

Now, the Emperor of the fourth Card is alone, without a court or retinue. His throne is in no way to be found in a room of the Imperial Palace, but rather in the open – in the open in an uncultivated field, not located in a town. A meager clump of grass by his foot is there as the whole imperial court – as all the witnesses of his imperial splendor. But the clear sky is spread above him. He is a silhouette on the background of the sky. Alone in the presence of the sky – this is how the Emperor is.

One could ask: why is the astonishing fact that the Emperor is found with his throne in the open air (under the starry sky, if you wish) overlooked by so many authors on the Tarot? Why have they not stated the fact that the Emperor is alone, without a court or retinue? I believe that it is because it is rarely that one lets the symbol, the image of the symbol as such, say all that it has to say through its unique context. One lets it say a little, and one is suddenly more interested in one's own thoughts, i.e. in what one has to say oneself, rather than what the symbol has to say.

Yet the Card is specific: the Emperor is alone in open air in an uncultivated field and with a tuft of grass as his only company – save for the sky and the earth. The Card teaches us the arcanum of the authority of the Emperor, although it may be unrecognized, occult, unknown and unappreciated. It is a matter of the crown, the scepter, the throne and the coat-of-arms being guarded, without any witnesses other than the sky and the earth, by a solitary man leaning against the throne, with his legs crossed, wearing the crown, holding the scepter and clasping his belt. It is authority as such and it is the post of authority as such which is expressed here.

Authority is the magic of spiritual profundity filled with wisdom. Or, in other words, it is the result of magic based on gnosis due to mystical experience. Authority is the second H É of the divine name Y H V H. But it is not the second H É taken separately; it is only when the whole divine name manifests itself. For this reason it is more correct to say that authority is the completely manifested divine name. The completely manifested divine name signifies at the same time a post, the post of the Emperor, or the state of consciousness of the complete synthesis of Mysticism, Gnosis and sacred Magic. And it is this state of consciousness of complete synthesis which is initiation. Initiation understood here not in the sense of ritual nor in the sense of the possession of information held to be secret, but rather in the sense of the state of consciousness where eternity and the present moment are one. It is the simultaneous vision of the temporal and the eternal, of that which is

below and that which is above.

The formula of initiation remains always the same:

"Verum, sine mendacio, certum et verissimum: Quod est inferius, est sicut quod est superius; ET quod est superius, est sicut quod est inferius, Ad perpetranda miracula rei unius." (Tabula Smaragdina, 1-2)

This unity actualized, contemplated, practiced and understood is initiation or "the sanctification of the Divine Name in man", which is the deeper meaning of the first petition of the Pater Noster:- "SANCTIFICETUR NOMEN TUUM".

Now, "The Emperor" signifies the authority of initiation or of the initiate. It is due to the complete divine Name, from the Cabbalistic viewpoint – to the "magical Great Arcanum", from the point of view of magic – and to the "Philosopher's Stone", from the standpoint of alchemy. It is, in other words, the unity and synthesis of Mysticism, Gnosis and Magic. This unity or synthesis we have designated in the 2nd Letter as "Hermetic Philosophy", bound up with the "Hermetic-philosophical sense". This "Hermetic Philosophy" – it is necessary to repeat – does not signify a philosophy <u>derived</u> or disengaged from the organism of the unity of Mysticism, Gnosis and sacred Magic. It <u>is</u> this very unity in manifestation. Hermetic Philosophy is as inseparable from the unity, Mysticism-Gnosis-Magic, as is the second H É from the divine Name. It is the <u>authority</u> or the manifestation of the unity, Mysticism-Gnosis-Magic.

Hermetic Philosophy corresponds to the stage of "verissimum" ("most true") in that which is "verum, sine mendacio, et certum" ("true it is, without falsehood, and certain") in the "epistemological" formula of the Emerald Table. For it is this which is the <u>summary</u> of all mystical experience, gnostic revelation and practical magic. It is spontaneous mystical experience which becomes "true" (verum), or reflected in consciousness (in Gnosis) and then becomes "certain" (certum) through its magical realization – and which is then reflected a second time (the second H É, or the "second Gnosis", of the divine Name) in the domain of pure thought based on pure experience, where it is examined and finally summarized, and thus becomes "most true" (verissimum).

The formula: "Verum, sine mendacio, certum et verissimum" therefore states the principle of epistemology (or gnoseology) of Hermetic Philosophy, with its triple touchstone. This principle can be formulated in several ways. Here is one:- "That which is absolutely subjective (pure mystical experience) must objectivize itself in consciousness and be accepted there as <u>true</u> (gnostic revelation), then prove to be <u>certain</u> by its objective fruits (sacred Magic) and, lastly, prove to be <u>absolutely true</u> in the light of pure thought based on pure subjective and objective experience (Hermetic Philosophy)". It is a matter, therefore, of the four different "senses": the mystical sense or spiritual <u>touch</u>, the gnostic sense or spiritual <u>hearing</u>, the magical sense or sense of spiritual <u>vision</u> and, lastly, the Hermetic-philosophical sense or sense of spiritual <u>comprehension</u>. The triple

touchstone of Hermetic Philosophy is therefore the intrinsic value of a revelation ("verum, sine mendacio"), its constructive fruitfulness ("certum") and its concordance with earlier revelations, with the laws of thought and with all available experience ("verissimum"). In Hermetic Philosophy something is absolutely true, therefore, only when it is of divine origin and bears fruit in conformity with its origin, and is in accordance with the categorical exigencies of thought and experience.

The Hermeticist is therefore a person who is at one and the same time a mystic, a gnostic, a magician and a "realist-idealist" philosopher. He is a realist-idealist philosopher because he relies as much on experience as on speculative thought, as much on facts as on ideas, because facts and ideas are for him only two aspects of the same reality-ideality, i.e. the same truth.

Hermetic Philosophy, being the summary and synthesis of Mysticism, Gnosis and sacred Magic, is not a philosophy among other philosophies, or a particular philosophical system amongst other particular philosophical systems. Just as the Catholic Church, being catholic or universal, cannot consider itself as a particular church among other particular churches, nor consider its dogmas as religious opinions among other religious opinions or "confessions", so Hermetic Philosophy, being the synthesis of all that which is essential in the spiritual life of humanity, cannot consider itself as a philosophy amongst many others. Presumption? - It would be, without any doubt, a monstrous presumption if it were a matter of human invention instead of revelation from above. In fact, if you have a truth revealed from above, if the acceptance of this truth brings miracles of healing, peace and vivification with it, and if, lastly, it explains to you a thousand unexplained things — that are inexplicable without it — can you then consider it as an opinion among other opinions?

Dogmatism? Yes, if one understands by "dogma" the certainty due to revelations of divine worth which prove fruitful and constructive, and due to the confirmation that they receive from reason and experience together. When one has certainty based on the concordance of Divine revelation, Divine-Human operation and Human understanding, how can one act as if one did not have it? Is it truly necessary to deny three times before the cock crows in order to be accepted into the good company of "free spirits" and "non-dogmatics", and to be chauffeured along with them by the fire of things relating to human creation? Heresy? -- Yes, if by "heresy" one understands the primacy of universal revelation, of good works universally recognized as such, and of the ideal of universality amongst philosophies.

Hermetic philosophy is not a particular philosophy amongst particular existing philosophies. It is not so already for the sole reason that it does not operate with univocal concepts and their verbal definitions, as do philosophies, but rather with arcana and their symbolic expressions. Compare the Emerald Table with "The Critique of Pure Reason" by KANT and you will see the difference. The Emerald Table states the fundamental arcana of mystical-gnostic-magical-philosophical work; "The Critique of Pure Reason" elaborates an

edifice composed of univocal concepts (such as the categories of quantity, quality, relation and modality) which, all together, portray the transcendental method of Kant, i.e. the method of "thinking about the act of thought" or "reflection about reflection". This method, however, is an aspect of the XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot ("The Moon"), as we shall see, and this Arcanum, expressed by the symbol of the Card "The Moon", teaches in the Hermetic way the essence of what Kant taught in the philosophical way about the transcendental method.

So, is Hermetic Philosophy only symbolism pure and simple, and has it nothing to do with the methods of philosophical and scientific reasoning?

Yes and no. Yes, in so far as Hermetic Philosophy is of an esoteric nature, i.e. it consists of arcana orientated towards the mystery and expressed in symbols. No, in so far as it exercises a stimulating effect on the philosophical and scientific reasoning of its adherents. It is wrapped, so to say, in a philosophical and scientific intellectual penumbra, which is due to the activity of its adherents pursuing the aim of translating, in so far as it is possible to do so, the arcana and the symbols of Hermetic Philosophy into univocal concepts and verbal definitions. It is a process of crystallization, because the translation of multivocal concepts or arcana into univocal concepts is comparable to the transition from the state of organic life to the mineral state. It is thus that the "occult sciences" — such as the Cabbala, Astrology and Alchemy — are derived from Hermetic Philosophy. These sciences are able to have their own secrets, but the arcana which are reflected in them belong to the domain of Hermetic Philosophy. In so far as the intellectualization of Hermetic Philosophy is of the nature of commentary and corollary, it is legitimate and even indispensable. For then one will translate each arcanum into many univocal concepts — three for example — and, by this very fact, one will help the intellect to habituate itself to think Hermetically, i.e. in multi-vocal concepts or arcana. But when the intellectualization of Hermetic Philosophy pursues the aim of creating an autonomous system of univocal concepts without formal contradiction between them, it commits an abuse. For instead of helping human reason to raise itself above itself, it would set up a greater obstacle for it. It would captivate it instead of freeing it.

The "occult sciences" are therefore derived from Hermetic Philosophy by way of intellectualization. This is why one should not consider symbols — the Major Arcana of the Tarot, for example — as allegorical expressions of theories or concepts of these sciences. For it is the opposite which is true: it is the doctrines of the occult sciences which are derived from symbols — of the Tarot or other symbols — and it is they which are to be considered as intellectually "allegorical" expressions of the symbols and arcana of Hermetic Esotericism. Thus it would not do to say :- the fourth Card "The Emperor" is the symbol of the astrological doctrine concerning Jupiter. One would rather say: the Arcanum of the 4th Card "The Emperor" is also revealed in the astrological doctrine concerning Jupiter. The

correspondence as such remains intact, but there is a world of difference between these two statements here. Because in the case of the first statement, one remains an "astrologer" and nothing but an astrologer; whilst in the case of the second statement, one is thinking as a Hermeticist, although remaining an astrologer if one is one.

Hermetic Philosophy is not composed of the Cabbala, Astrology, Magic and Alchemy. These four branches sprouting from the trunk do not make the trunk, rather they live from the trunk. The trunk is the manifested unity of Mysticism, Gnosis and sacred Magic. There are no theories; there is only experience, including here the intellectual experience of arcana and symbols. Mystical experience is the root, the gnostic experience of revelation is its sap and the experience or practice of sacred Magic is its wood. For this reason its teaching – or the "body" of its tradition – consists of spiritual exercises and all its arcana (including the Arcana of the Tarot) are practical spiritual exercises, whose aim is to awaken from sleep ever-deeper layers of consciousness. Necessary commentaries and corollaries accompany this practice and constitute the "bark" of the trunk. Thus, the "key" to the Apocalypse of St. John is nowhere to be found. For it is not at all a matter of interpreting it with a view to extracting a philosophical, metaphysical or historical system. The key to the Apocalypse is to practice it, i.e. to make use of it as a book of spiritual exercises which awaken from sleep ever-deeper layers of consciousness. The seven letters to the churches, the seven seals of the sealed book, the seven trumpets and the seven vials signify, all together, a "course" of spiritual exercises composed of 28 exercises. For as the Apocalypse is a revelation put into writing, it is necessary, in order to understand it, to establish in oneself a state of consciousness which is suited to receive revelations. It is the state of concentration without effort (taught by the first Arcanum), followed by a vigilant inner silence (taught by the second Arcanum), which becomes an inspired activity of imagination and thought, where the conscious self acts together with super-consciousness (teaching of the third Arcanum). Lastly, the conscious self halts its creative activity and contemplates – in letting pass in review – everything which preceded, with a view to summarizing it (practical teaching of the fourth Arcanum). The mastery of these four psychurgical operations, symbolized by "The Magician", "The High Priestess", "The Empress" and "The Emperor", is the key to the Apocalypse. One will search in vain for another.

The Gospels, likewise, are spiritual exercises, i.e. one has not only to read and re-read them, but also to plunge entirely into their element, to breathe their air, to participate as an eyewitness, as it were, in the events described there – and all this not in a scrutinizing way, but as an admirer, with ever-growing admiration.

The Old Testament also contains parts which are spiritual exercises. The Jewish Cabbalists – the author or authors of the Zohar, for example – made such use of it, and it is thus that the Cabbala originated and that it lives. The difference between Cabbalists and the other faithful depends only on the fact that the former drew spiritual exercises from the

Scripture while the latter studied and believed it.

The aim of spiritual exercises is depth. It is necessary to become deep in order to be able to attain experience and knowledge of profound things. And it is symbolism which is the language of depth – thus arcana, expressed by symbols, are both the means and the aim of the spiritual exercises of which the living Tradition of Hermetic "Philosophy" is composed.

Spiritual exercises in common form the common link that unites Hermeticists. It is not knowledge in common which unites them, but rather the spiritual exercises and the experience which goes hand in hand with them. If three people from different countries were to meet each other, having made the Book of Genesis by Moses, the Gospel of St. John, and the Vision of Ezekiel, the subject of spiritual exercises for many years, they would do so in brotherhood, although the one would know the history of humanity, the other would have the science of healing and the third would make a profound Cabbalist. That which one knows is the result of personal experience and orientation, while depth, the niveau to which one attains – disregarding the aspect and extent of knowledge that one has gained – is what one has in common. Hermeticism, the Hermetic tradition, is in the first place and above all a certain degree of depth, a certain niveau of consciousness. And it is the practice of spiritual exercises which safeguards this.

With respect to the knowledge of individual Hermeticists – and this is applicable to initiates also – it depends upon the individual vocation of each one of them. The task that one pursues determines the nature and the extent not only of knowledge but also of the personal experience upon which this knowledge is based. One has the experience and gains knowledge of that which is necessary for the accomplishment of the task which proceeds from one's individual vocation. In other words, one knows that which is necessary in order to be informed and to be able to orientate oneself in the domain relevant to one's individual vocation. Thus a Hermeticist whose vocation is healing would know things about the relationships existing between consciousness, the system of the "lotus flowers" ("Chakras"), the nervous system and the system of endocrine glands, that another Hermeticist, whose vocation is the spiritual history of humanity, would not know. But this latter, in his turn, would know things ignored by the healer – facts of the past and of the present concerning relationships between spiritual hierarchies and humanity, between that which took place or is taking place above and that which took place or is taking place below.

But this knowing, in so far as it is not a matter of arcana, consists of facts – though often of a purely spiritual nature – and not theories. Thus, for example, "reincarnation" is in no way a theory which one has to believe or not believe. In Hermeticism no one would dream of putting forward a case in order to persuade, or even to dissuade, people of the truth of the "reincarnationist theory". For the Hermeticist it is a fact which is either known through experience or ignored. Just as one does not make propaganda for or against the fact that we sleep at night and wake up anew each morning – for this is a matter of experience – so is the fact that we die and are born anew a matter of experience, i.e. either one has certainty

about it or else one does not. But those who are certain should know that ignorance of reincarnation often has very profound and even sublime reasons associated with the vocation of the person in question. When, for example, a person has a vocation which demands a maximum of concentration in the present, he may renounce all spiritual memories of the past. Because the awakened memory is not always beneficial; it is often a burden. It is so, above all, when it is a matter of a vocation which demands an attitude entirely free of all prejudice, as is the case with the vocations of priest, doctor and judge. The priest, doctor and judge have to concentrate themselves in such a way on the tasks of the present that they must not be distracted by memories of former existences.

One can perform miracles without the memory of former lives, as was the case with the holy vicar of ARS - and one can also perform miracles, wholly in possession of this memory, as was the case with Monsieur PHILIP of LYONS. For reincarnation is neither a dogma, i.e. a truth necessary for salvation, nor a heresy, i.e. contrary to a truth necessary for salvation. It is simply a fact of experience, just as sleep and heredity are. As such, it is neutral. Everything depends on its interpretation. One can interpret it in such a manner as to make it a hymn to the glory of God - and one can interpret it in such a way as to make it a blasphemy. When one says: to forgive is to grant the opportunity to begin again; God forgives more than seventy-times-seven times, always granting us opportunities anew -- what infinite goodness of God! Here is an interpretation to the glory of God.

But when one says: there is a mechanism of infinite evolution and one is morally determined by previous lives; there is no grace, there is only the law of cause and effect — then this is a blasphemous interpretation. It reduces God to the function of the engineer of a moral machine.

Reincarnation is in no way an exception in what is liable to a double interpretation. In fact, every pertinent fact is liable to it. Thus, for example, heredity can be interpreted in the sense of complete determinism, therefore excluding freedom, and thus also morality. Or rather it can be interpreted as a possibility for gradual improvement of the organism in order to render it a more perfect instrument to vocations for posterity. Didn't Abraham receive the promise that the Messiah would come in his lineage? Wasn't this same promise given to David?

Nevertheless, whatever the personal interpretation of a fact may be, a fact remains a fact and it is necessary to know it when one wants to orientate oneself in the domain to which it belongs. Thus, Hermeticists have knowledge of diverse facts, according to their personal vocations, but Hermeticism is nevertheless not the sum-total of knowledge acquired by individuals. It is an organism of arcana expressed in symbols which are at the same time both spiritual exercises and their resulting aptitudes. An arcanum practiced as a spiritual exercise for a sufficient length of time becomes an aptitude. It does not give the pupil knowledge of new facts, but makes him suited to acquire such knowledge when he has need of it. Initiation is the capacity for orientating oneself in every domain and of acquiring

there knowledge of relevant facts – the "key facts". The initiate is one who knows how to attain knowledge, i.e. who knows how to ask, seek and put into practice the appropriate means in order to succeed. Spiritual exercises alone have taught him – no theory or doctrine, however luminous, may in any way have rendered him capable of "knowing how to know". Spiritual exercises have taught him practical sense (and in Hermetic "Philosophy" there is no other sense than the practical) and the infallible effectiveness of the arcanum of the three united endeavors, which is the basis of every spiritual exercise and every arcanum, namely:

"Ask, and it will be given you;
Seek, and you will find;
Knock, and it will be opened to you." (Luke xi, 9)

Thus, Hermetic Philosophy does not teach what one ought to believe concerning God, man and Nature, but it teaches rather how to ask, seek and knock in order to arrive at mystical experience, gnostic illumination and the magical effect of that which one seeks to know about God, man and Nature. And it is after having asked, sought and knocked – and after one has received, found and gained access – that one k n o w s. This kind of knowing – the certainty of the synthetic comprehension of mystical experience, gnostic revelation and magical effect – is the Emperor; this is the practical teaching of the fourth Card of the Tarot.

It is a matter here of the development and usage of the spiritual "fourth sense", i.e. the "Hermetic-philosophical" sense, following the development and usage of the mystical, gnostic and magical senses. The aptitude for "k n o w i n g how to know" is the characteristic trait essential to this sense. We have defined it above (2nd Letter) as the "sense of synthesis". Now we are able to advance and to do so in a much more profound way in defining it as the "i n i t i a t e s e n s e" or the sense of orientation and acquisition of knowledge of essential facts in every domain.

How does this sense function? There is reason to indicate in the first instance that it is not identical with what one customarily designates as "metaphysical sense", since the "metaphysical sense" of metaphysicians is the taste and capacity for living in abstract theories, the liking for the abstract, while the "Hermetic-philosophical sense" is on the contrary due to the orientation towards the concrete – spiritual, psychic and physical. While the "metaphysical sense" operates with the "concept of God", the "Hermetic-philosophical sense" is orientated towards the living God – the spiritual, concrete fact of God. The Christian Celestial Father and the Ancient of Days of the Cabbalists is not an abstract concept; it is not a notion, but rather a being.

The "metaphysical sense" works in such a manner as to deduce – by way of abstraction – the laws of facts and the principles of laws. The initiate sense or the "Hermetic-philosophical" sense, in contrast, perceives through the Facts the entities of the spiritual hierarchies, and through them the living God. For the initiate sense the space between the "supreme Principle" and the domain of facts is not peopled with "laws" and "principles", but rather with living spiritual beings, each endowed with a manner, look, voice,

way of speaking and name. For the "initiate sense" the Archangel Michael is not a "law" or "principle". He is a living being whose face is invisible because it has given place to the face of God. This is why he has the name of M I - K H A - E L, i.e. "He who (MI) is as (KHA) God (EL)". No one could endure the vision of the face of Michael, because he is "kha-El", i.e. "like unto God".

The initiate sense or "Hermetic-philosophical" sense is that of concrete spiritual realities. The Hermeticist "explains" facts not by "laws" obtained by abstraction nor, much less still, by "principles" obtained by active abstraction, but rather by proceeding from "abstract facts" to more concrete beings in order to arrive at that which is the most concrete, that alone in existence which is absolutely concrete, i.e. G o d. Because for the initiate sense God is that which is most real, and therefore most concrete. In fact, amongst all that exists, God is that alone which is absolutely real and concrete, while created beings are only relatively real and concrete; and what we designate as "concrete fact" is in reality only an abstraction from divine reality.

This does not mean to say that the Hermeticist is incapable of abstraction and that he necessarily neglects laws and principles. He is a human being and therefore also possesses the "metaphysical sense". In possessing it he makes use of it like everyone, but what makes him a Hermeticist - in the sense of "The Emperor" of the Tarot - is the "Hermetic-philosophical sense". He is as much a Hermeticist as he is endowed with the Hermetic-philosophical sense and makes use of it, while the metaphysical sense alone would never make a Hermeticist, in the proper sense of the word.

Is this not the tragedy of René GUÉNON who, being gifted with a developed metaphysical sense and yet lacking the Hermetic-philosophical sense, sought, always and everywhere, the concrete spiritual. And, finally, tired of the world of abstractions, he hoped to find liberation from intellectualism by plunging himself into the element of fervor of the Moslem masses at prayer in a Cairo mosque. The last hope of a soul thirsty for mystical experience and languishing in the captivity of the intellect? - If so, may divine mercy grant him what he sought so much.

There is room to remark here that the last orientation of René GUÉNON, i.e. towards the faith of simpler people adhering to a more simple religion, is not without reason. For the "Hermetic-philosophical sense" has more in common with the plain and sincere faith of simple people than abstract metaphysics has. For the common believer, God lives; likewise for the Hermeticist. The believer addresses himself to saints and angels; for the Hermeticist they are real. The believer believes in miracles; the Hermeticist lives in the presence of miracles. The believer prays for the living and the dead; the Hermeticist dedicates all his efforts in the domain of sacred Magic to the good of the living and the dead. The believer esteems all that which is traditional; the Hermeticist does likewise. What more is there to say? Perhaps that the Emperor owes his authority not to his power - visible or invisible - over human beings, but rather because he represents them before the face of Heaven. He has authority

not because he is superhuman, but rather because he is very human, because he represents all that which is human. King David was more human than all men of his time. This is why he was anointed by divine order by the prophet Samuel, and for this reason the Eternal gave him the solemn promise that his throne would be established for ever. The throne, the post of representative of humanity, will therefore never perish. And it is this which is the post of the Emperor; it is this which is true authority.

Hermetic Philosophy also has a human ideal to which it aspires. Its spiritual exercises, its arcana, follow the practical aim of realizing the man of authority, the father-man. This is the man who is more human than all others... the man worthy of "the throne of David". –

The human ideal of practical Hermeticism is not the Superman of Nietzsche, nor the superman of India plunged in contemplation of eternity, nor the Superman-hierophant of Gurdjieff, nor the Superman-Philosopher of the Stoic and Vedanta philosophies – no, its human ideal is the man who is human to such a degree that he contains and bears in himself all that which is human, that he may be the guardian of the throne of David.

And the divine? How is it here in that which concerns the manifestation of the Divine?

Practical Hermeticism is A l c h e m y. The ideal of Hermeticism is essentially and fundamentally the alchemical ideal. This means to say: the more one becomes truly human, the more one manifests the divine element underlying human nature, which is the "image and likeness of God" (Genesis i,26). The ideal of Abstraction invites human beings to do away with human nature, to dehumanize. In contrast, the ideal of alchemical Transformation of Hermeticism offers to human beings the way to the realization of true human nature, which is the "image and likeness of God". Hermeticism is the re-humanization of all elements of human nature; it is their return to their true essence. Just as all base metal can be transformed into silver and into gold, so are all the forces of human nature susceptible to transformation into Silver and Gold, i.e. into what they are when they share in the Image and Likeness of God.

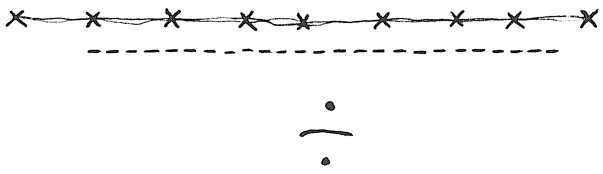
But in order to re-become what they are in their essence, they must be submitted to the operation of s u b l i m a t i o n. Now, this operation is crucifying for that which is base among them and, at the same time, it is the blossoming of that which is their true essence. The C r o s s and the R o s e, the R O S E + C R O S S, is the symbol of this operation of the realization of the truly human man. Thus, "The Emperor" of the Tarot renounces the four arbitrary liberties of human nature. He is, in this sense, crucified. And as the real symbol of the emptiness which is established because of renunciation is the w o u n d – one could say that the Emperor is he who has f o u r w o u n d s.

It is by these four wounds that the manifestation of the divine image and likeness of human nature is accomplished in him.

The divine in human nature.. and what of the Divine which transcends it?

In order for the latter to manifest, it is necessary to have one wound more. It is

necessary to have <u>f i v e</u> wounds. Now, it is the following Card "The P O P E" which will teach us the Arcanum of the manifestation of the Divine transcending human nature by means of the f i v e w o u n d s.



LETTER V:--

Meditation on the fifth Major Arcanum of the Tarot –

"THE POPE"

"LE PAPE"

At vero Malki-tzadek rex Salem, proferens panem et vinum, erat enim sacerdos Dei Altissimi, benedixit ei, et ait:
Benedictus Abram Deo excelso...
et benedictus Deus excelsus...
(Genesis xiv, 18-20)
(And Melchizadek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said:
Blessed be Abram by God Most High...
and blessed be God Most High...)

Ego sum via et veritas et vita: nemo venit ad Patrem, nisi per me.
(John xiv, 6)
(I am the way, the truth and the life: no one comes to the Father, but by me.)

De cetero nemo mihi molestus sit: ego enim stigmata Domini Jesu in corpore meo porto. (Galatians vi, 17)
(Henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.)

Dear Unknown Friend,

The Card "The Pope" puts us in the presence of the act of benediction. It is essential to have this in mind when one undertakes the interpretation not only of the structure of the whole Card but also of each of its particular elements. One should therefore never lose from sight that in the first place it is a matter of benediction and everything associated with it – no matter who "the Pope" may be or who the acolytes kneeling before him are, and no matter what the two columns behind "the Pope" signify, and no matter what his tiara and the triple cross he is holding symbolize. What is benediction? What is its source and its effect? Who has the authority to bestow benediction? What role does it play in the spiritual life of humanity?

Now, benediction is more than a simple good wish made for others; it is also more than a magical impress of personal thought and will upon others – it is the putting into action of

divine power transcending the individual thought and will of the one who is blessed as well as the one who is pronouncing the blessing. In other words it is an essentially sacerdotal act.

The Cabbala compares the role of prayer and benediction to a double movement, ascending and descending, similar to the circulation of the blood. The prayers of humanity rise towards God and, after having been divinely "oxidized", are transformed into benedictions which descend below from above. This is why one of the "acolytes" of the Card has his left hand raised and the other has his right hand lowered. The two blue columns behind "the Pope" symbolize in the first place this twofold current - rising and descending - of prayers and benedictions. At the same time "the Pope" himself holds aloft a triple cross on the side with the "column of prayer" and the praying acolyte, while his right hand - on the side with the "column of benediction" and the acolyte receiving (or "inspiring") benediction - makes the gesture of benediction.

The two "sides" of the Cabbala - the "right" side and the "left" side - and the two "columns" of the Sephiroth Tree, the pillar of Mercy and that of Severity, and similarly the two pillars of the temple of Solomon, J a c h i n and B o a z, correspond exactly to the two columns of prayer and benediction on this Card. Because it is Severity which stimulates prayer and it is Mercy which blesses. The venous "blue" blood of Boaz ascends and the arterial oxidized "red" blood of Jachin descends. The "red" blood bears the vivifying benediction of oxygen; the "blue" blood rids the organism of the severity of carbonic acid. It is the same in the spiritual life. Spiritual asphyxia menaces he who does not practice some form of prayer; he who practices it receives vivifying benediction in some form. The two "columns" therefore have an essentially practical significance - as practical spiritually as respiration is for the life of the organism.

Thus, the first practical teaching - for the Major Arcana of the Tarot are spiritual exercises - of the fifth Arcanum relates to spiritual respiration.

There are two kinds of respiration: horizontal respiration which takes place between "outside" and "inside", and vertical respiration which takes place between "above" and "below". The "sting of death" or the essential crisis of the supreme agony is the abrupt passage from horizontal to vertical respiration. Yet he who has learned vertical respiration while living will be spared from this "sting of death". For him the passage from the one form of respiration to the other will not be of the nature of a right angle but rather the arc of a circle: ⌟ ⌣ . The transition will not be abrupt but gradual, and curved instead of rectangular.

Now, the essence of vertical respiration is the alternation between prayer and benediction or grace. These two elements of vertical respiration manifest themselves in all domains of the inner life - mind, heart and will. Thus a relevant problem for the mind, which is not due to curiosity or intellectual collectionism, but rather to the thirst for truth, is fundamentally a prayer. And the illumination by which it may be followed is the corresponding benediction or grace. True suffering, also, is fundamentally always a prayer. And the consolation, peace and joy

which can follow are the effects of the benediction or grace corresponding to it.

True effort of the will, i.e. one hundred percent effort, true work, is also a prayer. When it is intellectual work, it is prayer: hallowed be thy name. When it is creative effort, it is prayer: thy kingdom come. When it is work with a view to supplying for the material needs of life, it is prayer: give us this day our daily bread. And all these forms of prayer in the language of work have their corresponding benedictions or graces.

The law of correspondence between the column of prayer (or problems, suffering, effort) and that of benediction (or illumination, consolation, fruits) is found expressed by the Master in the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount. The nine (for there are nine, and not eight) beatitudes can thus be understood as the formula of vertical respiration. They teach it to us.

This respiration is the state of soul that the apostle Paul designated as "freedom in God". It is a new way of breathing. One freely breathes the divine breath, which is freedom.

"The Lord is Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is f r e e d o m ".
(II Corinthians iii,17)

The spiritual counterpart to horizontal respiration is the alternation from "extroversion" to "introversion" or from attention to the objective external life to the subjective inner life. The law of horizontal respiration is:- "Love your neighbor as yourself" -- There is the equilibrium between these two directions of attention.

With respect to vertical respiration, its law is: - "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind". There is the relationship between prayer and benediction or grace.

There are three levels of horizontal respiration, just as there are three stages of vertical respiration.

The three levels of horizontal respiration are:

l o v e of N a t u r e,
l o v e of one's n e i g h b o r,
l o v e of the beings of the spiritual hierarchies (angels, etc.).

The three stages of vertical respiration are:

p u r i f i c a t i o n (by divine breath);
i l l u m i n a t i o n (by divine light);
m y s t i c a l u n i o n (in divine fire).

This is why "the Pope" holds aloft the triple cross. The triple cross has three crosspieces which divide the vertical line into three parts. It is the cross of complete and perfect spiritual respiration, horizontal and vertical: ⸸. It is the cross of triple love of neighbor (lower neighbor = Nature, equal neighbor = man, higher neighbor = beings of the hierarchies) and triple love of God (breath or faith, light or hope, fire or love).

It is the "scepter" of the Pope's authority for this Card, just as the sphere formed from the double cup and topped by the cross is the scepter of the Emperor. Just as the Emperor, guardian of the "throne of David", represents towards Heaven the human, i.e. the divine image and likeness in man, so does the Pope, guardian of the Portal to the Pillars of Benediction and Prayer, represent transcendental Divinity towards mankind.

The two posts, that of Emperor and that of Pope, are two spiritual realities. They are as real as the "head" and the "heart" are in the life of the individual. The heart is the center of respiration and blood circulation; the head is the center of the nervous system and is the seat of thought.

And just as no parliament will replace the spiritual reality of the post of Emperor — the "throne of David" cannot be replaced by collectivity — so will no ecumenical council replace the spiritual reality of the post of Pope or the "throne of Melchizadek, king of Plenitude (Salem)". Whether the "cannon shot" predicted in "esoteric circles of the Occident" be given or not, whether the sacerdotal throne remains visible or whether it be installed in the catacombs, it will certainly remain present for ever in the future history of humanity — despite what the prophets of its destruction may say.

Because history — as, moreover the life of the individual — is worked by day and by night. It has a diurnal aspect and a nocturnal aspect. The former is exoteric, while the latter is esoteric. The silence and obscurity of the night is always full of events in preparation — and all that which is "unconscious" or "superconscious" in the human being belongs to the domain of "night". This is the magical side of history, the side of magical deeds and works acting behind the facade of history "by day". Thus, when the Gospel was preached by the light of day in the countries around the Mediterranean, the nocturnal rays of the Gospel effected a profound transformation of Buddhism. There, the ideal of individual liberation by entering the state of Nirvana gave way to the ideal of renouncing Nirvana for the work of mercy towards suffering humanity. The ideal of Mahayana, the Great Chariot, then had its resplendent ascent to the heaven of Asia's moral valves.

"Day to day pours forth speech (אֹמֶר - ' O m e r)
Night to night declares knowledge (דַּעַת - D a ' a t h)
(Psalm xix, 1; the Vulgate gives here for the corresponding Psalm the Latin text:
"Dies diei eructat v e r b u m
et nox nocti indicat scientiam")

This is the formula of the twofold teaching — by the speech of day and by the knowledge of night; of the twofold tradition — by verbal teaching and by direct inspiration; of twofold magic — by the spoken word and by silent radiation; and, lastly, of twofold history — "visible" history by day and "invisible" history by night.

Now, the posts of Emperor and Pope are realities beyond as well as on this side of the threshold which separates "day" and "night". And the "Pope" of the fifth Card is the guardian of this threshold. He is seated between the two pillars — the pillar of day or prayer and the pillar of night or benediction.

"The Emperor" of the fourth Card is the Master of the "day" and the Guardian of the Blood or quintessence of the nocturnal reality of the day. "The Pope" is the guardian of Respiration or of the reality of the relationship between day and night. That which he guards is the equilibrium between day and night, between human

effort and divine grace. His post is founded on primordial cosmic deeds.

"God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day and the darkness night." (Genesis i,5)

says the first book of Moses. And the act of separation of the intelligible from the mysterious signifies at the same time the establishing of cosmic respiration, which is the analogy of "the Spirit of God moving above the face of the waters". For the divine breath (r u a c h 'e l o h i m) above the profoundness of peace ("the waters" – it is this which is the psychological as well as the cosmic reality of Nirvana) is the divine prototype of respiration. Therefore the "Great Chariot", the "Mahayana" of Buddhism, raises itself towards the divine breath — the Mercy which moves above the waters of the pre-cosmic peace of Nirvana, while the "Little Chariot", the Hinayana, aspires towards the end of respiration; its aim is to be drowned in the waters of peace – to enter into Nirvana where there is no movement – neither change nor respiration.

But the divine Breath (ruach 'elohim) is above the ocean of peace of Nirvana; the divine Breath moves it. And to renounce Nirvana, after having arrived at its threshold, means to say: rise above Nirvana and participate in the divine Breath transcending it.

Now, primordial water penetrated by divine breath is the essence of B l o o d; breath reflected by the water is L i g h t; the rhythmic alternation from absorption of the breath by water to its reflection by it is R e s p i r a t i o n. Light is the Day, Blood is the Night, and Respiration is Plenitude (Salem). MELCHIZADEK, king of Salem, Priest of the Most High God (k o h e n l e'e l 'e l y o n -- כֹּהֵן לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן) is therefore appointed to Plenitude, to Respiration, while the Anointed King, guardian of the "throne of David", or the Emperor, is appointed to the Day. Although he is appointed to the Day, he is anointed by the Night and he owes his authority to the Night, whose mysterious presence during the Day – the Blood – he guards.

Dear Unknown Friend, you will probably ask yourself if there is a third post, a post for he who is appointed to the Night?

Yes, the post of Master of the Night (he is also named "Lord of the Night") exists. We shall approach the various ideas relating to this post in Letter IX dedicated to the IXth Arcanum of the Tarot.

It suffices to indicate here that in Israel there were three higher posts – the posts of k i n g, high p r i e s t and p r o p h e t. This is also the place to remark that it is a matter of posts, and not of persons; a single person can sometimes occupy two or even three posts.

But let us return to the post of the Pope, which is the subject of the Vth Arcanum of the Tarot. It relates to spiritual Respiration, as we have seen. This is why the Pope represents another category of truth and another criterion of truth than the scientific truth and criterion. For him "true" is that which comprises harmonious respiration; "false" is that which upsets the harmony of spiritual respiration. Thus, the heliocentric system of modern astronomical science is "true" from the point of view of phenomena, but

it is at the same time fundamentally "false" from the viewpoint of spiritual Respiration. The Blood that issued from Christ onto the earth is precious to such a degree that he gave the Earth the central position in the space of noumenal values. The geocentric cosmos is therefore true from the point of view of Respiration, i.e. from the point of view of the life of prayer and benediction. And the heliocentric cosmos, although it has the support of all the facts of the phenomenal world, is false because it fails to recognize that which is truly central – the Incarnation of the Word – and replaces it by a center situated more at the periphery, removed from the central value. The sun is only a center in phenomenal space, and one commits the sin of idolatry in attributing to it the central role which belongs to the sanctified Earth – sanctified, and thus rendered central, by the Incarnation of the Word.

Here is another example, this time from the domain of esoteric experience:++

As we have already mentioned, reincarnation – successive lives of the same human individuality – is a fact of experience, as are the successive periods of wakefulness belonging to the day, which are interrupted by sleep at night. Buddha recognized the fact of reincarnation as such, but he considered it regrettable. This is why the aim of the eightfold path which he taught is to put an end to reincarnation. Because Nirvana is the end of successive terrestrial lives.

Thus Buddha recognized and at the same time denied the fact of reincarnation. He recognized it as fact and he denied it as ideal. Because facts are transitory; they come and go. There was a time when there was no reincarnation; there will be a time when it will no longer be. Reincarnation commenced only after the Fall and it will cease with Reintegration. It is therefore not eternal, and therefore it is not an ideal.

There are therefore two truths: the one is actual or temporal and the other ideal or eternal. The first is founded on the logic of facts; the other – on moral logic. Now, Psalm 85 designates actual truth אֱמֶת (e m e t h) by the word truth (veritas) and truth based on moral logic – חֶסֶד (chesed) by the word mercy (misericordia). The Psalm says:

> "Mercy (chesed) and Truth (emeth) will meet;
> Justice (tzedek) and Peace (schalom) will embrace each other.
> Truth (emeth) will spring up from the ground (me'eretz).
> And Justice (tzedek) will look down from the heavens (mischamayim)."
> (Psalm 85, 10-11)

Here is the problem of "double truth" in its entirety – and here is the moving prophecy that the two truths, the factual and the moral, will at some time meet and that their revelation in man – justice (tzedek) and peace (schalom) – will embrace each other! But they will meet only slowly and, given the actual state of affairs, they often still contradict one another, at least in appearance. This is why St. Paul had to say that "the wisdom of this world is folly with God" (I Corinthians iii, 19). And this is why also divine wisdom is often folly before this world...

Now, the Pope being the guardian of spiritual respiration (and the letter ה, Hé, the

fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, has breath as its primitive hieroglyph!), is the representative of moral logic.

Benediction and Prayer are the two pillars between which he is seated. It is only that which is ideal which is true for him. Here is why, for him, marriage is indissoluble – though there may be thousands of matrimonial catastrophes; here is why confession and repentance efface every sin – though thousands of tribunals only punish the guilty, whether they repent or not; here is why the Church is guided by the Holy Spirit – though it practiced or tolerated the practice of the Inquisition for centuries; and here is why a single life on earth suffices for eternal salvation – although souls reincarnate.

Thus, the Pope is always at the middle of a conflict between ideal truth and actual truth, between Mercy (chesed) and Truth (emeth). And this conflict is a wound – namely the fifth wound, the wound of the heart. For if the Emperor has four wounds, the Pope has five.

If you are acquainted, dear Unknown Friend, with the symbolism of the Cabbala, you know that the wound spoken of here is due to the opposition between the fourth Sephirah, C H E S E D, Mercy, and the fifth Sephirah, G E B U R A H, Severity, on the Tree of the Sephiroth – and that this wound refers to the sixth Sephirah, T I P H E R E T H, Beauty or Harmony, which is the synthesis of the two preceding Sephiroth.

If, moreover, you occupy yourself with Christian Esotericism, you will comprehend that the wound in question is that of the S a c r e d H e a r t, caused externally by "one of the soldiers (who) pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water" (John xix, 34). And you will understand also that it is Mercy and Truth (Chesed and Emeth) that came out as blood and water. This is why the Evangelist emphasizes the symbolic reality or the real symbolism of the fact that the blood and water that came out of the wound were not mixed and that it is in this fact that the spiritual sense of the wound is found expressed. The wound is caused spiritually by the conflict between mercy and truth, between ideal truth and actual truth, which are not united....

And the Evangelist goes on to say: "He who saw it has borne witness – his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth – that you may also believe" (John xix, 35). He has therefore seen the fact, and he knows what he wants to say as a symbol of the spiritual reality of the wound.

But now we are in the realm of the Esotericism of the Five Wounds, the Flaming Star, the Pentagram, the quinternary or the number five.....

L.C. de SAINT-MARTIN says that "As long as numbers are united and bound up with the decad, there is not one that presents the image of corruption or deformity. It is only when one separates them that these characteristics manifest themselves. Among the numbers thus specified, some are absolutely evil, such as 2 and 5. These are also the only ones which divide the number ten." (Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, "Des nombres", Nice, 1946, xxi)

According to Saint-MARTIN, the quinternary (with respect to the binary, we refer

you to LETTER II, where you may find a discussion of the statement of Saint-Martin concerning the evil nature of the number Two) is therefore absolutely evil when it is not united and bound up with the decad. Thus, he says, --

> "the forms of animals must also be such as to serve as receptacles for the torments of the quinternaries, torments that we ourselves exert against them in imitation of these same quinternaries." (Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, "Des nombres", Nice, 1946, xxxi)

Eliphas LÉVI says, however, that :- - "The Pentagram signifies the domination of the mind over the (4) elements; and the demons of air, the spirits of fire, the phantoms of water and ghosts of earth are enchained by this sign. Equipped therewith, and suitably disposed you may behold the infinite through the medium of that faculty which is like the soul's eye, and you will be ministered unto by legions of angels and hosts of fiends" -- Then - : "The empire of will over the astral light, which is the physical soul of the four elements, is represented in magic by the pentagram, placed at the head of this chapter" -- And further still :- "On 24 July in the year 1854, the author of this book, Eliphas Lévi, made an experiment of evocation with the Pentagram, after due preparation according to the ceremonies indicated in the thirteenth chapter of the Ritual" - And lastly -- "We must remark, however, that the use of the Pentagram is most dangerous for operators who are not in possession of its complete and perfect understanding. The direction of the points of the star is in no sense arbitrary, and may change the entire character of an operation, as we shall explain in the Ritual" (Eliphas Lévi, "Dogme et rituel de la haute magie"; trsl. A. E. Waite, "Transcendental Magic. Its Doctrine and Ritual", London, 1968, pp. 63, 67, 69)

In chapter five of "Transcendental Magic. Its Doctrine and Ritual" we find the following summary of Eliphas LÉVI's doctrine concerning the pentagram :-

> "The Pentagram, which in Gnostic schools is called the Blazing Star, is <u>the sign of intellectual omnipotence and aristocracy</u>." (ibid., trsl. p. 237)

But in "The Key of the Mysteries" Eliphas LÉVI says :-

> "The quinary (or quinternary) is the number of religion, for it is the number of God united to that of woman." (Eliphas Lévi, "The Key of the Mysteries", trsl. A. Crowley, London, 1969, p. 30)

And much later still, in his posthumous work "Le Grand Arcane ou l'Occultisme Dévoilé" ("The Great Arcanum, or Occultism Unveiled") Eliphas LÉVI writes :-

> "The ancient rites have lost their effectiveness since Christianity appeared in the world.
>
> The Christian and Catholic religion, in fact, is the legitimate daughter of of Jesus, king of the Mages.
>
> A simple scapular worn by a truly religious person is a more invincible talisman than the ring and pentacle of Solomon.
>
> The Mass is the most prodigious of evocations. Necromancers evoke the dead, the sorceror evokes the devil and he shakes, but the Catholic priest does

not tremble in evoking the living God.

Catholics alone have priests because they alone have the altar and the offering, i.e. the whole of religion.

To practice high Magic is to compete with the Catholic priesthood; it is to be a dissident priest. Rome is the great Thebes of the new initiation. It has crypts for its catacombs; for talismen, its rosaries and medallions; for a magic chain, its congregations; for magnetic fires, its convents; for centers of attraction, its confessionals; for means of expansion, its pulpits and the addresses of its bishops; it has, lastly, its Pope, the Man-God rendered visible."
(Eliphas Lévi, "Le Grand Arcane ou l'Occultisme dévoilé", Paris, 1921, pp. 67-68, 83-84)

And we conclude by citing Joséphin PÉLADAN, who declared himself in agreement with the preceding:--

"The Eucharist is the whole of Christianity; and through it Christianity has become living magic.

Since Jesus, there are still sorcerors, (but) there are no mages."
(Joséphin Péladan, "L'occulte catholique", Paris, 1898, p. 312)

Well, after all these quotations, where are we now?

We have arrived at a very serious problem: that of the pentagram or <u>evil quinternary</u> and the Pentagram or <u>good quinternary</u>.

Because according to Saint-MARTIN – whose clear presentation of the problem lends itself better than any other in serving as a point of departure – the quinternary is <u>good</u> "as long as it is united and bound to the decad" and it is "absolutely <u>evil</u>" when it is separated and isolated from it. In other words, the pentagram as the sign of <u>intellectual autocracy</u>, i.e. the emancipated human personality, is <u>good</u> when it is the expression of the personality whose will is united and bound to the Fullness of the manifestation of Unity, i.e. the decad; and it is <u>evil</u> when it expresses the will of the personality separated from this Unity. Or, in other words again, the sign is good when it expresses the formula: F i a t v o l u n t a s T u a ("Thy will be done"); and it is evil when the formula of the underlying will is: F i a t v o l u n t a s m e a ("my will be done"). Here is the moral and practical meaning of Saint-MARTIN's statement.

With regard to the statements of Eliphas LÉVI and Joséphin PÉLADAN that we have quoted, they add their conviction that it is the Universal or Catholic Church which represents for humanity the decad or fullness of manifested unity. For them, the will united and bound to the essence of the Church is expressed by the good pentagram, understood in the sense of Saint-Martin, and the will that is purely and simply personal is expressed by the evil pentagram. This is why Madame BLAVATSKY accused Eliphas LÉVI of Jesuit politics and why Joséphin Péladan's old occultist-friends regretted his relapse into Roman sectarianism.

But now, it is not a question of taking sides in the "war of the two roses", nor of

accusing or regretting. Here it is a matter of the problem of personal arbitrary magic (the quinternary separated from the decad) and personal sacred magic (the quinternary united and bound to the decad). And this is the t h e s i s that I put forward with regard to this problem, a thesis which is the fruit of 43 years of experience in the esoteric domain:-

It is only the pentagram of the five wounds which is the effective sign of personal sacred magic, while the pentagram of the five currents of personal will, no matter how the points of this pentagram are turned, is the effective sign for the imposition of the personal will of the operator on beings weaker than him — it is always a fundamentally tyrannic act.

This is the t h e s i s. Let us now proceed to its explanation.

A magical act presupposes an effect surpassing the normal power of the operator. This surplus of power may be furnished by forces which are obedient to the operator, or by forces borrowed by him, or, lastly, by forces acting through the operator and which he obeys.

In the case of forces which are supplied to the operator by submission it is a matter of the operation of magic that we have designated (in Letter III) as "personal or arbitrary", i.e. an operation whose source of initiative, whose means and aim are found exclusively in the will and understanding of the personality of the operator. Such an operation can only make use of forces lower than the operator. For one does not command angels. The operator here is alone and acts as a magical technician under his own responsibility and at his own risk and peril. One could also designate this type of magic as "Faustian".

In the case of forces borrowed by the operator, it is a matter of an act of collective magic. It is the "magic chain" which renders the operator more powerful; it "lends" him the forces which he then makes use of for the operation. In this case the operator is aided by forces which are equal to him (and are not lower than him as in the case of "Faustian" magic). The power and effect depend here on the number of people belonging to the "chain". One could designate this type of magic as "collective".

Lastly, in the case of forces acting through the operator as intermediary and which he obeys, it is also a matter of a "chain", but a v e r t i c a l and qualitative (hierarchical) chain instead of a horizontal and quantitative chain, which latter is the case with "collective" magic. The operator here is alone in the horizontal sense, but he is not in the vertical sense: above him beings higher than him act with him and through him. This type of magic presupposes the fact of being in conscious relationship with higher spiritual beings, i.e. it assumes prior mystical and gnostic experience. We have designated this type of magic (in Letter III) as "sacred Magic", because the forces active in operations of this magic are superior to the operator. However, its historical name is "theurgy".

The formulas expressing the fundamental attitude of the personal will corresponding to the three types of magic described above are:

F i a t v o l u n t a s m e a (Faustian magic);
F i a t v o l u n t a s n o s t r a (collective magic);
F i a t v o l u n t a s T U A (sacred magic).

The first two forms of magic - Faustian and collective - make use of the method of

which the pentagram of the five currents of personal and collective will is the sign. They are based on the principle that the strong dominates the weak. It is a matter here of the power of compulsion.

With respect to the third form of magic — sacred magic — the method it makes use of is not the force of the will, but rather its purity. But the will as such is never entirely pure — for it is not the "flesh" which bears the stigmata of original sin, nor thought as such, but rather the will — it is necessary that the five dark currents inherent in the human will, i.e. the desire to be great, to take, to keep, to advance and to hold on to at the expense of others — are paralyzed or "nailed". The five wounds are therefore the five vacuities which result in the five currents of the will. And these vacuities are filled by will from above, i.e. by absolutely pure will.

This is the principle of the magic of the pentagram of 5 wounds.

Before proceeding to the question of the way in which the five wounds of the will are produced and what the concrete practical method of the magic of the pentagram of five wounds is, it is necessary rather that we ponder on the concept itself of "the wound".

A "wound" is a door through which the objective exterior world intrudes into the interior of the closed system of the subjective interior world. Speaking biologically, it is a breach in the walls of the fortress of the organism by which forces from outside the organism penetrate into its interior. A simple lesion of the skin, for example, signifies such a breach and for a certain time gives the air (and all that which is borne by the air) access into an interior region of the organism which would be barred to it if the skin were intact.

Now, the organ of sight, the eye, in comparison with the surface of the human body covered over with skin, is a wound which can be covered by mobile skin — the eyelids. Through this wound the objective outer world penetrates into our inner life with that much greater intensity, corresponding to the degree that sight reveals more of the outer world than the sense of touch. With the eyelids closed, the place where the experience of the world named "sight" takes place becomes again that reduced experience of the world — yet normal for the entire surface of the body — that we designate as "touch".

The eyes are open wounds which are so sensitive that they suffer with (i.e. react to) every nuance of light and color. And it is the same with the other sense organs. They are wounds, i.e. it is they which impose on us the objective reality of the outer world. There where I would like to see beautiful flowers, my eyes make me see a pile of dung. I am forced to see what the objective world shows me by way of my eyes. It is like a nail from outside nailing my will.

The senses — given that they are sound and functioning normally — are wounds through which the objective world, without regard to our will, imposes itself on us.

But the senses are organs of perception, not of action. Imagine that the five organs of action — the limbs, including the head in its function as a limb — were to have analogous wounds, i.e. that the five currents of will of which they are an expression were to give access to an objective will which would be to personal desires what sense perceptions are to

the play of fantasy.

This is the esoteric concept of the wound. And this concept can become a spiritual reality, then psychic, and eventually even physical with some people. The stigmatics - from Saint Francis of ASSISI to Padre Pio in Italy and Teresa NEUMANN in Germany during the present epoch - are people for whom the reality of the five wounds has reached to the physical plane. These are the <u>future organs</u> of the will in formation, the organs of action which taken together have the sacred pentagram as their sign - the quinternary united and bound to the fullness of the decad, according to Saint-Martin.

It is still necessary to specify the five wounds corresponding to the five dark currents of the will - the desire for personal greatness, to take, to keep, to advance and to hold onto at the expense of others -- which correspond, in their turn, to the five limbs (including the head as a limb), although only four are allocated to the corresponding limbs. The desire to take or get hold of things is bound to the right hand; similarly, the desire to retain or keep belongs to the left hand; likewise, the desire to advance at the expense of others and the desire to hold onto at the expense of others correspond to the right foot and the left foot respectively; but it is not the case concerning the desire for personal greatness that it corresponds to the head. The head does not bear the fifth wound, for two reasons: firstly, because it bears the "crown of thorns" (to which we endeavored to give an explanation in Letter IV), which is born, in principle, by every person capable of <u>objective</u> thought - the "crown of thorns" being given to the human being since the beginning of human history. It is that subtle organ which is designated for us in the Occident as the "<u>eight-petalled lotus</u>", and which is designated in India as the "<u>thousand-petalled lotus</u>" or Sahasrara (crown center). This crown center is a "natural gift", as it were, to each human being and every normal person possesses it. The "thorns" of the crown center function as the "nails" of objectivity, which give conscience (in the sense of the French word "conscience" or the German word "Gewissen", or "sovest" in Russian) to thought. It is thanks to them that thought has not become wholly emancipated and as arbitrary, for example, as the imagination is. Thought <u>as such</u> is, in spite of all, the organ of truth, not of illusion.

Thus, it is not thought as such which allows the desire for personal greatness or the tendency towards megalomania, but rather <u>the will</u> which makes use of the head and which can take hold of thought and reduce it to the role of its instrument. And this constitutes the second reason as to why the fifth wound - that of <u>organic</u> humility, replacing the current of the will-to-greatness - is not found in the head, but rather in the <u>heart</u>, i.e. it reaches the heart, penetrating from the right-hand side. Because it is there that the will-to-greatness has its origin and it is there from whence it takes hold of the head and makes it its instrument. This is why many thinkers and scientists want to think "without the heart" in order to be objective - which is an illusion, because one can in no way think without the heart, the heart being the <u>activating</u> principle of thought; what one can do is to think with a humble and warm heart instead of with a pretentious and cold heart.

Thus, the fifth wound (which is the <u>first</u> in so far as its importance is concerned) is

that of the h e a r t instead of the head, the head being from the point of view of the active will an instrument or "limb" of the heart.

Let us now turn to the question concerning the origin of the Five wounds, i.e. how they are produced, and to the concrete practical method of the magic of the sacred pentagram of five wounds.

How does one acquire the five wounds?

There exists only one single method, one sole means leading to this. And - no matter whether in full knowledge or whether instinctively - every esotericist, every mystic, every idealist, every spiritual-seeker and, lastly, every man of good will makes use of it, in Europe as in Asia, today as twenty centuries ago. This universal method of all ages and all cultures is nothing other than the practice of the traditional t h r e e v o w s, namely obedience, poverty and chastity.

Obedience rivets the will-to-greatness of the heart; poverty holds fast the desire to take and the desire to keep of the right hand and the left hand; chastity pins down the desires of the Nimrodic "hunter" - to advance and to hold onto at the expense of others or, in other words, to hunt and to trap game - of the right foot and the left foot.

The vow of obedience is the practice of silencing personal desires, emotions and imagination in the face of reason and conscience; it is the primacy of the ideal as opposed to the apparent, the nation as opposed to the personal, humanity as opposed to the nation, and God as opposed to humanity. It is the life of cosmic and human hierarchical ordering: it is the meaning and justification of the fact that there are Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones; Dominions, Virtues, Powers; Principalities, Archangels, Angels; Priests, Knights and Commoners. Obedience is order: it is international law; it is the state; it is the Church; it is universal peace. True obedience is the very opposite of tyranny and slavery, since its root is the love which issues from faith and confidence. That which is above serves that which is below and that which is below obeys that which is above. Obedience is the practical conclusion to that which one recognizes as the existence of something higher than oneself. Whosoever recognizes G o d, obeys.

Such obedience as is practiced in religious orders and the Catholic spiritual knighthood is a form of training - moreover, very effective - of the will, with a view to rivetting the will-to-greatness. The obedience that the chela has to his guru in India and Tibet follows, in principle, the same aim. This is true also of the absolute obedience that the hassidim have towards the tzadekim in the Jewish Hassidic communities, and similarly it is so with the obedience without reserve on the part of the disciples of the Startzy (spiritual Masters) in orthodox, pre-Bolshevist Russia.

The universal formula of obedience is: Fiat voluntas tua.

The vow of p o v e r t y is the practice of inner emptiness, which is established as a

consequence of the silence of personal desires, emotions and imagination so that the soul is capable of receiving from above the revelation of the word, the life and the light. Poverty is perpetual active vigil and expectation before the eternal sources of creativity; it is the soul awaiting that which is new and unexpected; it is the aptitude for learning always and everywhere; it is the "conditio sine qua non" of all illumination, all revelation and all initiation.

The following is a short story which makes evident in a wonderful way the practical spiritual meaning of poverty.

Once upon a time four brothers went on a journey in order to seek the greatest treasure. After a week of travelling they arrived at a mountain of iron ore. "A whole mountain of iron ore!" cried one of the four. "There is the treasure we have been seeking!" - But the three others said:- "This is not the greatest treasure," and continued their walk, while their brother remained by the mountain of iron ore. He was now rich and they were as poor as before. One month later they arrived at a field strewn with greenish and yellowish stones. "This is copper!" cried one of the three brothers. "This is certainly the treasure that we are seeking!" But the two other brothers did not share his opinion. Thus, he remained there, being the rich proprietor of a copper mine, while the two others continued on their way as poor as they were before.

After a year they arrived at a valley full of stones shining with a whitish light. "Silver!" cried one of the two brothers. "Here at last is the treasure that we are seeking!" But the other brother shook his head and continued on his way, while his brother remained there as the rich proprietor of a silver mine.

Seven years later he arrived at a stony place in an arid desert. He sat down, being half-dead with fatigue. It was then that he noticed that the pebbles under his feet were gleaming. It was g o l d.

The vow of c h a s t i t y means to say the putting into practice of the resolution to live according to solar law, without covetousness and without indifference. Because virtue is boring and vice is disgusting. But that which lives at the foundation of the heart is neither boring nor disgusting. The foundation of the heart is l o v e. The heart lives only when it loves. It is then like the sun. And chastity is the state of the human being in which the heart, having become solar, is the center of gravity.

In other words, chastity is the state of the human being where the centre named in occidental esotericism as the "twelve-petalled lotus" (Anāhata in Indian esotericism) is awakened and becomes the sun of the microcosmic "planetary system". The three lotus centers situated below it (the ten-petalled, the six-petalled and the four-petalled) begin then to function in conformity with the life of the heart (the twelve-petalled lotus), i.e. "according to solar law". When they do this, the person is chaste, no matter whether he or she is celibate or married. Thus there are virgins

who are married and mothers of children, and there are physical virgins who are not so in reality. The ideal of the Virgin-Mother that the traditional Church (Catholic and Orthodox) puts forward is truly worthy of reverence. It is the ideal of chastity which triumphs over sterility and indifference.

The practice of chastity does not concern solely the domain of sex. It bears equally on all other domains where there is a choice between solar law and all sorts of dulling intoxications. Thus, for example, all fanaticism sins against chastity, because there one is carried away by a dark current. The French revolution was an orgy of perverse collective intoxication, just as the revolution in Russia was. Nationalism – such as in the Germany of Hitler – is likewise a form of intoxication drowning the conscience of the heart and is therefore incompatible with the ideal of chastity.

There are also forms of practical occultism which lend themselves to the pursuit of an unhealthy intoxication. Thus Joséphin PÉLADAN acknowledged:-

> "I do not conceal it; we have all at first been seduced by the aesthetic of occultism, and infatuated with the quaint and the strange; one has subscribed to the amusements of nervous females; one has sought thrills – the thrill of the invisible and of the beyond; one has asked for the excitement of the incorporeal."
> (Joséphin Péladan, "L'occulte catholique", Book III, chap. II, "L'occulte du fils ou Théurgie"; Paris, 1898, p.309)

The practice of chastity holds fast the leanings of the <u>hunter</u> in the human being, of which the male side is inclined to pursue game and the female side to set traps. The practice of poverty binds the tendencies of the <u>thief</u> in the human being, where the male side is inclined to seize and the female side to keep indefinitely, instead of waiting for the free gift or the merited fruit of work. The practice of obedience, lastly, rivets the will-to-greatness or the inclinations of the <u>usurper</u> in human nature, whose male side is inclined to estimate itself great in its own eyes and whose female side seeks to make itself estimated so in the eyes of others.

These three "v o w s" therefore constitute the sole known and indispensable method which leads to the "five w o u n d s", i.e. to the effective pentagram of Sacred Magic. It is still necessary to specify that it is not a matter of the <u>virtues</u> of humility, poverty and chastity being wholly realized – because no man in the flesh can possess these virtues totally – but rather of their p r a c t i c e, i.e. sincere efforts aimed at their realization. It is the effort which counts.

Such is the answer to the question: How does one acquire the five wounds? Now follows the response to the question: How does the magic of the sacred pentagram of the five wounds operate?

As we have indicated above, it is the <u>purity</u> of the will and not its force which constitutes the basis of the magic of the sacred pentagram of 5 wounds. In this it corresponds to divine magic, which does not force but establishes (or re-establishes)

freedom of choice through the presence of the true, the beautiful and the good. Now, it is a matter in the magic of the sacred pentagram of five wounds of accomplishing the living presence of the good alongside the consciousness of the subject of the operation. For good does not fight evil; it does not struggle against it - the good is only present, or it is not. Its victory consists in that it results in being present, its defeat in that it is forced to be absent. And it is the five wounds which assure the presence of the good, i.e. the presence of p u r e will from above.

The following is an episode which is found in the "Considerations on the Stigmata of Saint Francis" (Fifth Consideration) and which is well suited to serve as a key to the problem with which we are occupied.

A Franciscan friar prayed for eight years following the death of Saint Francis that the secret words which the Seraphim had spoken to saint Francis when he gave him the stigmata would be revealed to him. Now, one day saint Francis appeared to him and to seven other friars and, turning towards this friar, spoke to him thus:

> "Know, dearest friar, that when I was on the mount of Alverna, all rapt in the contemplation of the Passion of Christ, in this Seraphic vision I was by Christ thus stigmatized in my body; and then Christ said to me:- "Knowest thou what I have done to thee? I have given thee the marks of my Passion in order that thou mayst be My standard-bearer. And even as I, on the day of My death, descended into Limbo and drew thence all the souls I found therein, by virtue of my Stigmatas, and led them up to paradise, so do I grant to thee from this hour (that thou mayst be conformed to Me in thy death as thou hast been in thy life) that after thou hast passed from this life thou shalt go every year, on the day of thy death, to purgatory, and shalt deliver all the souls thou shalt find there of thy three Orders, to wit, Minors, Sisters and Penitents, and likewise the souls of thy devoted followers, and this, in virtue of thy Stigmatas that I have given thee; and thou shalt lead them to paradise. "And those words I told not while I lived in the world."
> ("Considerations on the Glorious Stigmata of St. Francis" in "The Little Flowers of Saint Francis", book ii, ch. 9; trsl. T. Okey, London, 1963, pp. 129-130)

This said, saint Francis suddenly disappeared. Numerous friars subsequently heard this narrative from the lips of the eight friars who were present at this vision and revelation of saint Francis. And "Frater Jacobus Blancus lector Romanus praedicavit hoc et dixit se audisse ab uno fratre de supradictis octo" ("Brother Jacobus Blancus, lector Romanus, proclaimed this and said that he had heard it from one of the above-named eight") adds the manuscript of Saint-Isidore (discussed by Paul SABATIER) at the end of the narrative.

Let us now analyze the narrative from the point of view of the magic of the sacred pentagram of the five wounds.

It may be noticed first of all that the Stigmata given to saint Francis are of a spiritual as well as a corporeal nature, for their virtue (i.e. their magical power) continues after his death. Also, here it is indicated that the virtue of the Stigmata of

saint Francis, as well as those of Christ himself, is revealed in that he is able to lead back souls from Limbo and purgatory and conduct them to paradise. Let us mention, lastly, that the narrative is quite categorical concerning the statement that it is only by virtue of his Stigmata that Jesus Christ prior to his resurrection led souls out of Limbo and conducted them to paradise, and similarly it is only by virtue of his Stigmata that saint Francis, also, withdraws from purgatory each year on the day of his death all souls who are bound to him by a spiritual tie and leads them to paradise.

Take the terms "Limbo", "purgatory" and "paradise" in their meaning as understood by analogy and you have a clear and precise formula for the working of the magic of the sacred pentagram of five wounds: it effects a change from the natural state ("Limbo") and from the state of human suffering ("purgatory") to that of the blessedness of the divine state ("Paradise"). The operation of the magic of the sacred pentagram of five wounds therefore consists in transforming the natural state into the human state and this latter into the divine state. This is the work of spiritual Alchemy of the transformation from Nature ("Limbo"), and from the Human ("Purgatory"), into the Divine ("Paradise"), according to the traditional threefold division - Nature, Man and God.

Let us now consider more closely the <u>practical</u> meaning of the terms "Limbo", "purgatory" and "paradise", in so far as they are stages in the work of transmutation - or <u>liberation</u> - of the magic of the sacred pentagram of the five wounds.

Their <u>practical</u> meaning is not spatial, i.e. referring to "places", but refers rather to <u>states</u> of the human being - in body, soul and spirit. When we understand it thus, we shall readily discover that the three states are known to us through experience and that experience supplies us with the <u>keys of analogy</u> to be able to understand the ideas of "Limbo", "purgatory" and "paradise" as such, i.e. on all planes and at every level - psychological, metaphysical and theological - of their application.

Each of us has had the experience of a harmonious state of good health accompanied by a carefree state of soul and calmness of spirit. It is what one calls "joie de vivre", pure and simple. If there were no serious illnesses, sorrows and problems, this would be permanently our natural state. It is what <u>Nature</u>, in so far as it is virgin and unfallen, offers us, which we could enjoy constantly if there were no fallen elements in Nature - no sickness and sin, no sorrow, fear and remorse in ourselves - and if, above all, life as a whole was not the field which death reaps unceasingly. But we have nevertheless from time to time moments, hours, perhaps even whole days, of the experience of the natural joie de vivre, without sorrows or cares. And this experience supplies us with the key of analogy for understanding what the meaning of Limbo is. Limbo is the natural state of physical and psychic health that Nature - outside and within ourselves - can offer us from itself without the assistance of supernatural or divine grace. Limbo is the virginal part of Nature (human nature and outer Nature) according to the traditional doctrine "natura vulnerata non deleta" ("Nature is wounded but not destroyed"). Those who know the BHAGAVAD-GITA, or who have occupied themselves at all with the Hindu tradition, will easily

recognize in the state designated by the term "Limbo" the state or "guna" of Nature (Prakriti) that is called Sattva in India (the other two "gunas" being called tamas and rajas).

Concerning the experience relating to "purgatory", it comprises all purging - suffering - physical, psychic and spiritual. It is corporeal, moral and intellectual suffering which is our intermediate state between the experience of the natural innocence of Limbo and the moments of heavenly joy when the rays of paradise reach us.

We already experience here below a foretaste of purgatory and of paradise. We suffer and the consolations of Heaven are given us. Human life is natural innocent joy, and its ruin is through sin; what ensues is suffering and it is the rays of benediction from Heaven which console us. This is our life. It consists of experiencing the <u>reality</u> of Limbo, purgatory and paradise.

Now, the magic of the sacred pentagram of five wounds "leads souls out of Limbo and purgatory and conducts them to paradise". This means to say that it makes Heaven present in "Limbo" and "purgatory", that it enables it to descend into the domain of innocent and suffering nature. This, in turn, means to say that it introduces the supernatural into the natural, heals sickness, illumines consciousness and enables participation in the spiritual life. "Purgatory" includes <u>all</u> sickness and <u>all</u> suffering. "To be led out of it" signifies liberation from it, i.e. to be healed, illumined and reunited with the spirit.

The magic of the five wounds operates by the <u>presence</u> of the reality of the superhuman spiritual world by means of the wounds, and accomplishes the transmutation from the states of "Limbo" and "purgatory" to the state of union with the Divine, or "paradise". Concerning the ritual or "technical" side of the magic of the sacred pentagram with five wounds, this is to be found outlined in the third Letter, relating to the Arcanum "The Empress".

The quinternary "united and bound to the decad" of which Saint-MARTIN speaks is therefore the quinternary or pentagram of five wounds. The other quinternary, qualified by Saint-Martin as "absolutely evil", is separated from the <u>decad</u>, i.e. from the five currents (or "members") of the human will, endowed with five wounds from the divine will. (The five currents of the human will endowed with five wounds also correspond to the letters YHShVH of the name: יהשוה - I H S C H U H, Jesus - as is accepted symbolically by KHUNRATH, KIRCHER, SAINT-MARTIN and others, although in Hebrew the name of Jesus is written: ישוע).

But I shall not say, as radically as Saint-Martin does, that the quinternary separated from the decad is absolutely evil. It is, rather, <u>arbitrary</u> - and it is evil only in so far as the human personality emancipated from the Divine and from Nature is evil.

In any case the pentagram, other than that of the five wounds, is not the sign of "black magic", but rather that of arbitrary magic, or "grey magic", if you wish.

Because it is the sign of the power of the personality as such – which is inevitably a mixture of good and evil, even when it acts with the best intentions in the world. Oswald WIRTH says concerning this:

> "Common Magic deceives itself about the power of this sign, which by itself confers no power. The individual will is powerful only in the measure to which it is in harmony with a more general power.... Let us not seek to develop the Will artificially and to transform ourselves into athletes of the will..."
> (Oswald Wirth, "Le Tarot des imagiers du moyen âge", Paris, 1927, p.123)

Regarding the two forms of the pentagram – with the point above and with the point below – they do not in any way correspond to the division of magic into "white Magic" and "black magic" (although the traditional masters – Eliphas LÉVI, for example – teach this). You can certainly draw the head of a goat (as Eliphas Lévi does) in the "reversed pentagram"; it does not become through this the sign of black magic. The two forms of the pentagram refer to human electricity (i.e. the electricity of the human organism accompanying the movements of the will) – of the head and of the legs, which has nothing to do with horns. It is the same electricity in both cases, with the sole difference that in the case of the pentagram with the point turned above it is the will of the intellect which moves the electrical currents, while in the case of the pentagram with the point turned below, it is the intelligence of the will which does so. The two poles of the will can equally serve good or evil – although in fact both represent a mixture of the two principles. It is true, however, that there is more chance in the case of the sign of the pentagram with the point turned above for reason and conscience to make the best of the operation than in the case of the reversed pentagram, but all depends here on the intellectual and moral state of the operator. A perverse intellectuality would certainly make worse use of the upright pentagram than a sound will motivated by a good intention would of the reversed pentagram. Therefore let us not be afraid of the reversed pentagram, or depend too much on the upright pentagram.

But let us return to the quinternary bound and united to the fullness of the decad, i.e. to the sacred pentagram of five wounds. Let us consider it now not as an individual affair but rather as one for the whole of mankind.

Now, the history of mankind – seen from its "nocturnal" side – is at root the operation of a limited number of magical formulas and signs. Whatever you may do, you place yourself under the aegis of such a formula and sign. The Cross, the Pentagram and the Hexagram are signs and formulas which operate in the history of mankind. The Cross is the vow and virtue of Obedience, i.e. the sign and formula of F a i t h, as horizontal human respiration and vertical divine respiration united together.

The Pentagram is initiative; it is effort and work, i.e. the vow and virtue of Poverty – or the sign and formula of H o p e as the effect of the presence of divine light

here below.

The Hexagram is the vow and virtue of Chastity, i.e. the sign and formula of Love, as the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and Mother, Daughter and Holy Soul.

The spiritual history of mankind is the way from the Cross to the Pentagram, and from the Pentagram to the Hexagram, i.e. it is the school of obedience, poverty and chastity, and it is at the same time the divine, magical operation where Love is attained through Faith by means of Hope.

The Middle Ages erected the Cross above the nations, societies, aspirations and thoughts of Europe. This was the epoch of obedience and Faith – accompanied by every imaginable human abuse. This was followed by an epoch where the dawn of Hope made itself felt. Humanism, with its flourishing of Renaissance art, philosophy and science, was born under the sign of Hope. The sign of the Pentagram began its ascent. It was then that opposition arose between the sacred pentagram of five wounds and the pentagram of the emancipated personality. A purely humanistic art, science and magic had its development under the sign of the pentagram of Hope in man, as opposed to the sign of the pentagram of Hope in God, i.e. the sacred pentagram of the five wounds, under which latter sign Christian esotericism – Christian-orientated mysticism, gnosis, sacred magic and Hermeticism – has its development.

The impulse of freedom – of hope in emancipated man – has built up and demolished a great deal. It has created a materialistic civilization without parallel, but at the same time it has destroyed the hierarchical order – the order of spiritual obedience. A series of religious, political and social revolutions has ensued.

But the hierarchical order is eternal and obedience is indispensable. Now, new hierarchical orders are beginning to be established, replacing Obedience by tyranny and dictatorship. For he who sows the wind shall reap the whirlwind (cf. Hosea ix,7) – this is a truth that we are learning with so much suffering today. The pentagram of hope in emancipated man has in former times sown the wind – and we and our contemporaries are now reaping the whirlwind.

Now, the post of Pope in the spiritual history of mankind is that of guardian of the sacred pentagram of the five wounds, i.e. he guards the one legitimate way of passing from the Cross to the Pentagram and from the Pentagram to the Hexagram. The function of the spiritual post of Pope is to see to it that it is only after the Cross is taken up that the Pentagram has its ascent and that it is only after the sacred Pentagram of the five wounds is taken up that the raising of the Hexagram takes place. The mission of the post of Pope is to take care that spiritual Obedience, Poverty and Chastity – free and holy – do not disappear from the world and that there are always people in the world who embrace them and represent them. For these three practical vows constitute the preliminary condition for living Faith, luminous Hope and ardent Love, i.e. for the spiritual respiration of humanity. Mankind would suffocate spiritually without Faith, Hope and

Love or Charity. And it would be bereft of these if the practice of spiritual Obedience, Poverty and Charity — free and holy — were to cease.

The post of Pope or the Holy See is a formula of divine magic — just as the post of Emperor is — in the history of humanity. It is what is meant by the esoteric term Petrus ("P e t e r"). (ΠΈΤΡΑ = petra = rock). Petrus is the term in the Old and in the New Testament designating the divine, immovable ordinance or formula of divine magic. This is why the post of Pope was founded upon the quality of Petrus (Peter):-

> "And I tell you, you are Peter (Petrus), and on this rock (petra) I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew xvi, 18)

The five "gates of hell" — the will-to-greatness, the desire to take and to keep, the desire to advance and to hold on to at the expense of others — being the counter-formula, shall not prevail against the formula of the five wounds. And these wounds are "the keys to the kingdom of heaven".

The divine magical power of these keys is such that whatever is b o u n d by their virtue on earth will be b o u n d in heaven and that whatever is l o o s e n e d by their virtue on earth will be l o o s e n e d in heaven. For that which is above is as that which is below and that which is below is as that which is above. And when disobedience, greed and unchastity prevail on the earth of such a kind that there never was before — then it is the virtue of the keys or the s a c r e d w o u n d s which can re-establish the unity of that which is above and that which is below, i.e. "t o b i n d" and "t o l o o s e n", by an act which, put into words, would have the tenor of the following:-

May that which is <u>a b o v e</u> <u>b e</u> as that which is <u>b e l o w</u>, and may that which is <u>b e l o w</u> <u>b e</u> as that which is <u>a b o v e</u>.

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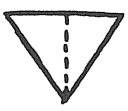
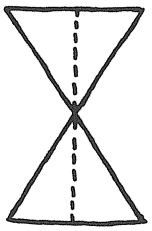
The idea of the hierarchy of the Emperor might be presented as:

The idea of the hierarchy of the P o p e might be presented as:



Together they make:



Letter VI: Meditation
on the sixth Major Arcanum of the Tarot
"The Lover"---
"L'Amoureux"

She seizes him and kisses him,
And with impudent face she says to him:
I had to offer sacrifices,
And today I have paid my vows.
So now I have come out to meet you,
To seek you eagerly, and I have found you.
(Proverbs vii, 13-15)

I, Wisdom, dwell in prudence,
And I possess knowledge and discretion...
I love those who love me,
And those who seek me find me.
(Proverbs viii, 12, 17)

Set me as a seal upon your heart,
As a ring upon your arm;
For love is as strong as death...
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
A flame of the Eternal.
(Song of Songs viii, 6-7)

Dear Unknown Friend,

Here the whole composition of Card VI is translated from the visual language of the Tarot into that of the poetry of Solomon. For there a dark-haired woman with an impudent face clad in a red robe seizes the shoulder of the young man while another, with fair hair and dressed in a blue mantle, makes appeal to his heart with a chaste gesture of her left hand. At the same time, above, a winged infant archer, standing out against a white sphere emitting red, yellow and blue flames, is about to let fly an arrow directed at the other shoulder of the young man. Does one not hear, in contemplating the sixth Card of the Tarot, a voice which says: "I have found you", and another which says: "Those who seek me find me"? Does one not recognize the voice of sensuality and the voice of the heart, and likewise the flashes of fire from above of which king Solomon speaks?

The central theme of the sixth arcanum is therefore that of the practice of the vow of Chastity, just as the fifth arcanum had Poverty as its theme and the fourth

Obedience. The sixth arcanum is at the same time the summary of the two preceding Arcana – Chastity being the fruit of Obedience and Poverty. It summarizes the three "vows" or methods of spiritual discipline in contrasting them with the three trials or temptations opposed to these vows. The choice before which the young man of the sixth arcanum finds himself placed is of greater significance than that between vice and virtue. It is a matter here of choice between on the one hand the way of Obedience, Poverty and Chastity and on the other hand the way of Power, Richness and Debauchery. The practical teaching of the arcanum "the Lover" is to do with the three vows and the three corresponding temptations. For this is the practical doctrine of the Hexagram or Sexternary.

The three vows are, in essence, memories of Paradise, where man was united with God (Obedience), where he possessed everything at once (Poverty), and where his companion was at one and the same time his wife, his friend, his sister and his mother (Chastity). For the real presence of God necessarily entails the action of prostrating oneself in the face of Him "who is more me than I myself am" – and here lies the root and source of the vow of Obedience; the vision of the forces, substances and essences of the world in the guise of the garden of divine symbols (the garden of Eden) signifies the possession of everything without choosing, without laying hold of, or without appropriating any particular thing isolated from the whole – and here lies the root and source of the vow of Poverty; lastly, total communion between two, between One and Another, which comprises the entire range of all possible relationships of spirit, soul and body between two polarized beings necessarily constitutes the absolute wholeness of spiritual, psychic and physical being, in love – and here lies the root and source of the vow of Chastity.

One is chaste only when one loves with the totality of one's being. Chastity is not wholeness of being in indifference, but rather in the love which is "strong as death and whose flashes are flashes of fire, the flame of the Eternal". It is living unity. It is three – spirit, soul and body – which are one, and the other three – spirit, soul and body – which are one; and three and three make s i x, and six is two, and two is o n e.

This is the formula of Chastity in love. It is the formula of Adam-Eve. And it is this which is the principle of Chastity, the living memory of Paradise.

And the celibacy of monks and nuns? How does the formula of Chastity "Adam-Eve" apply here?

Love is strong as death, i.e. death does not destroy it. Death can neither let one forget nor let one cease to hope. Those of us – we human souls of today – who bear within ourselves the flame of the memory of Eden cannot forget it, nor can we cease to hope for it. And if human souls come into the world with the imprint of this memory, and also with the impression of knowing that the meeting with the Other will not take place for them in this life here below, they will then live this life as if widowed, in so far as they

remember, and as if engaged, in so far as they hope. Now, all true monks are widowers and fiancés, and all true nuns are widows and fiancées, in the depths of their hearts. The true celibate bears witness to the eternity of love, just as the miracle of true marriage bears witness to its reality.

Yes, dear Unknown Friend, life is profound and its profundity is like an abyss of fathomless depth. NIETZSCHE felt this and knew how to express it in his "Song of the Night" ("Nachtlied" from "Thus Spake Zarathustra", part iii, ch. 15) –

"O Mensch, gib acht,
Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht –
Ich schlief, ich schlief – aus tiefen Traum bin ich erwacht –
Die Welt ist tief, noch tiefer als der Tag gedacht,
Tief ist ihr Weh,
Die Lust – noch tiefer als das Herzeleid –
Weh spricht – Vergeh,
Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit, will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit."

"O man! Take heed!
What saith deep Midnight, indeed?
I lay asleep, asleep –
I waked from my deep dream –
The world is deep,
And deeper than ever day may deem.
Deep is its woe –
Joy – deeper yet than woe is she:
Saith woe: Hence, go!
Yet Joy would have Eternity –
Profound, profound Eternity!"

(Friedrich Nietzsche, "Thus Spake Zarathustra", trsl. A. Tille, revised M. M. Bozman, Everyman Library, 1958, p. 284-285)

Thus, it is the same arrow – "the arrow of fire, of the Flame of the Eternal" – which brings about true celibacy as well as true marriage. The heart of the monk is pierced – and this is why he is a monk – just as is the heart of the fiancé on the eve of the wedding. Where is more truth or more beauty to be found? Who can say?

And charity, the love of one's neighbor? What is its relationship with the love whose prototype is given by the formula "Adam-Eve"?

We are surrounded by innumerable living and conscious beings – visible and invisible. But rather than knowing that they really exist and that they are as much alive as we ourselves, it nevertheless appears to us that they have a less real existence and that they are less living than we ourselves. For us it is WE who experience the full

measure of the intensity of reality, while other beings seem, in comparison with ourselves, to be less real; their existence seems to be more of the nature of a shadow than full reality. Our thoughts tell us that this is an illusion, that beings around us are as real as we ourselves are, and that they live just as intensely as we do. Yet fine as it is to say these things, all the same we feel ourselves at the center of reality, and we feel other beings to be removed from this center. That one qualifies this illusion as "egocentricity", or "egoism", or "ahamkara" (the illusion of self), or the "effect of the primordial Fall", does not matter; it does not alter the fact that we feel ourselves to be more real than others.

Now, to feel something as real in the measure of its full reality is to l o v e. It is love which awakens us to the reality of ourselves, to the reality of others, to the reality of the world and the reality of God. In so far as we love ourselves, we feel real. And we do not love – or we do not love as much as ourselves – other beings, who seem to us to be less real.

Now, two ways, two quite different methods exist which can free us from the illusion "me, living – you, shadow", and we have a choice. The one is to extinguish love of oneself and to become a "shadow amongst shadows". This is the equality of indifference. India offers us this method of liberation from ahamkara, the illusion of self. This illusion is destroyed by extending the indifference that one has for other beings to oneself. Here one reduces oneself to the state of a shadow equal to the other surrounding shadows. Maya, the great illusion, is to believe that individual beings, me and you, should be something more than shadows – appearances without reality. The formula for realizing this is therefore: "m e, s h a d o w – y o u, s h a d o w".

The other way or method is that of extending the love that one has for oneself to other beings, in order to arrive at the realization of the formula: "m e, l i v i n g – y o u, l i v i n g". Here it is a matter of rendering other beings as real as oneself, i.e. of loving them as oneself. To be able to attain this, one has first to love one's neighbor as oneself. For love is not an abstract program but, rather, it is substance and intensity. It is necessary therefore that one radiates the substance and intensity of love with regard to one individual being in order that one can begin to ray it out in all directions. "To be able to make gold one has to have gold", say the alchemists. The spiritual counterpart to this maxim is that in order to be able to love everyone one has to love or to have loved someone. This someone is one's neighbor.

Who is one's neighbor, understood in the Hermetic sense, i.e. meaning at one and the same time in a mystical, gnostic, magical and metaphysical sense? It is the being nearest to one at or since the beginning; this is the sister-soul for all eternity; this is one's twin-soul, the soul together with whom one beheld the dawn of mankind.

The dawn of mankind: it is this which the Bible describes as Paradise. Now, this was at the stage of existence that God said: It is not good that Adam should be alone

(Genesis ii,18).

To be: this is to love. To be alone: this is to love oneself. Now, "it is not good (t o v) that Adam should be alone" means to say: it is not good that man loves nobody but himself. This is why Y H V H - Elohim said: I will make him a helper similar to him ('e z e r k e n ē g e d o, helper corresponding to him). And as Eve was part of Adam himself, he loved her as himself. Eve was therefore the "neighbor", the being nearest to Adam ("bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh").

This is the origin of love, and it is common both to love which unites man and woman and to love of one's neighbor. In the beginning there was only one love and its source was one, since its principle was one.

All forms of love (charity, friendship, paternal love, maternal love, filial love, brotherly love) derive from the same unique primordial root of the fact of the couple Adam-Eve. For it is then that love — the reality of the Other — issued forth and could subsequently branch out and diversify. It is the warmth of love of the first couple (and it does not matter if there was only one couple or if there were thousands of them - it is a question of the fact of the first qualitative issuing forth of love and not of the number of simultaneous or successive cases of this issuing forth) which is reflected in the love of parents for their children, reflected in turn in the love of children for their parents, reflected again in the love of children amongst themselves, reflected lastly in the love for all kinship of human beings and beyond immediate kinship, by analogy, for all that lives and breathes... Love once born as substance and intensity, tends to spread, ramify and diversify according to the forms of human relationships into which it enters. It is a cascading current which tends to fill and inundate all. This is why when there is true love between parents, the children love their parents, by analogy, and love each other; they love, by analogy — as their brothers and sisters by psychological "adoption" — their friends in school and in the neighborhood; they love (always by analogy) their teachers, tutors, priests, etc. through reflection of the love that they have for their parents; and later they love their husbands and wives, as their parents once loved one another.

All this is clearly the inverse of Sigmund FREUD's pansexual doctrine. For Freud it is "libido" or sexual desire which is the basis of all human psychological activity, which constitutes the motivating energy thereof, and which then becomes — through the process of "sublimation" or direction through channels other than the satisfaction of sexual desire — creative force: socially, artistically, in science and religion. However, the whole of love understood in the sense of the formula "Adam-Eve", is to sexual desire as white light containing the seven colors is to the color red. "Adam-Eve" love includes the whole range of undifferentiated colors, while Freud's "libido" is only a single color isolated and separated from the whole. And this separation from the whole -- and the whole is the principle of Chastity — is exactly the inverse of Chastity; it is the very principle of unchastity. For unchastity is nothing other than the autonomy of carnal desire, so that the wholeness of

the human being – in spirit, soul and body – is ruined. Sexual desire is only one aspect of love – the aspect reflected by that part of the physical and psychic organism which is the special domain of the "four-petalled lotus" – and it constitutes only one-seventh of the of the human psychic-physical organism. There are therefore six more aspects, whose significance is in no way less, and which Freud's doctrine ignores (or even denies their existence).

Just as Karl MARX, being impressed by the partial truth (reduced to its simplest basis) that it is first necessary to eat in order to be able to think, raised the economic interest to THE principle of man and the history of civilization, so Sigmund Freud, being impressed by the partial truth that it is first necessary to be born in order to be able to eat and to think, and that sexual desire is necessary for birth, raised this latter to THE principle of man and the whole of human culture. As Marx saw "homo oeconomicus" (economic man) at the basis of "homo sapiens", so Freud saw "homo sexualis" (sexual man) at the basis of "homo sapiens".

Alfred ADLER could not follow his master in the attribution of absolute primacy to sex – his experience on many occasions contradicting this doctrine. Thus this founder of another school of depth psychology ("Tiefenpsychologie") was led to the discovery that it is the will-to-power which plays the leading role at the foundation of the human being. Adler then advanced the doctrine of "homo potestatis" – man motivated by the will-to-power – instead of the "homo sapiens" of XVIIIth century science, the "homo oeconomicus" of Mark, and the "homo sexualis" of Freud.

However, Carl Gustav JUNG, while admitting the partial truth of the doctrines of Freud and Adler, was led by his clinical experience to the discovery of a much deeper layer of the psyche than that studied by Freud and Adler. He had to admit the reality of a religious layer, which lies at a much greater depth than the layers of sex and of the will-to-power. Thus, thanks to the work of Jung, man is fundamentally "homo religiosus", a religious being, though he may also be an economic entity, a sexual entity and an entity aspiring to power.

Now, Carl Gustav JUNG re-established the principle of Chastity in the domain of psychology – the other psychological schools mentioned being contrary to Chastity, since they break down the unity of the spiritual, psychic and physical elements of the human being. He discovered the divine breath at the core of the human being.

At the same time the work of Jung constitutes the inauguration of a new method in the domain of psychology. It is the method of exploration of psychic layers in succession – corresponding to the layers of archaeology, palaeontology and geology. And just as archaeology, palaeontology and geology regard the layers with which they have to do as archives of the past (as time becomes space), so does the depth psychology of the school of Jung treat psychic layers as the living past of the soul, which is as distant as the layer in question is deep. The measure of depth here is at the same time that of the history of the soul's past, going back beyond the threshold of birth. One can well discuss whether the layers are collective or individual, whether their continuance is due to heredity or

reincarnation – but one can no longer deny the reality of these layers or their value as a key to the "psychic history" of man and mankind. More than that: one can no longer deny the fact that, in the psychic domain, nothing dies and that the whole past lives present in the diverse layers of the depths of consciousness – the "unconscious" or subconsciousness – of the soul. Palaeontological and geological layers contain only the imprints and fossils of the now dead past; psychic layers, in contrast, constitute a living witness to the actual past. They are the past which continues to live. They are memory – not intellectual, but psychically substantial – of the actual past. For this reason nothing perishes and nothing is lost in the domain of the psyche – essential history, i.e. real joy and suffering, real religions and revelations of the past, continue to live in us, and it is in we ourselves that the key to the essential history of mankind is to be found.

Now, it is in we ourselves that there is to be found the "Edenic" layer, or that of Paradise and the Fall, of which an account is found in the Book of Genesis of Moses. Do you doubt the essential truth of this account? Descend into the depths of your own soul, descend as far as the roots, to the sources of feeling, will and intelligence – and you will know. You will know, i.e. you will have certainty that the Biblical narrative is true in the most profound and authentic sense of the word – in the sense that you must deny yourself, deny the witness of the inner structure of your own soul, in order to be able to doubt the intrinsic truth of Moses' account. The descent into the depths of your own soul in meditating upon the account of Paradise in Genesis will render you incapable of doubt. Such is the nature of the certainty that one can have here.

But, of course, it is not a matter of certainty with regard to the garden, its trees, the serpent, the apple or other forbidden fruit, but rather with regard to the vital, psychic and spiritual realities that these images or symbols reveal. It is not the symbolic language of the account which gives certainty of its truth, but rather what it expresses.

It expresses in symbolic language the first layer – first in the sense of the "root of all that is human in human nature" – of human psychic life, or its "beginning". Now, knowledge of the beginning, initium in Latin, is the essence of initiation. Initiation is the conscious experience of the initial microcosmic state (this is the Hermetic initiation), and of the initial macrocosmic state (this is the Pythagorean initiation). The first is a conscious descent into the depths of the human being, to the initial layer. Its method is enstasy, i.e. experience of the depths at the foundation within oneself. Here one becomes more and more profound until one awakens within oneself to the primordial layer – or the "image and likeness of God" – which is the aim of enstasy. It is above all by means of the sense of "spiritual touch" that this experience of enstasy is effected. One can compare it to a chemical experiment undergone on the psychic and spiritual plane.

The second initiation experience – that we have designated "Pythagorean" from a historical point of view – is based above all on the "auditory" sense or sense of "spiritual hearing". It is essentially musical, just as the first is substantial or alchemical. It is by ecstasy – or

rapture, or going out of oneself – that the macrocosmic layers ("spheres" or "heavens") reveal themselves to consciousness. Pythagoras' "music of the spheres" was this experience, and it is this which was the source of the Pythagorean doctrine concerning the musical and mathematical structure of the macrocosm. For sounds, numbers and geometrical forms were the three stages of representing and mentally visualizing the ineffable experience of the "music of the spheres".

It is only from a historical point of view that we have designated as "Pythagorean" the macrocosmic initiation by means of ecstasy. For it is in no way a prerogative of the epoch prior to Christianity. The following is what the apostle Paul says of his own experience of the "spheres" or "heavens" in ecstasy:-

> "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was carried up to the third heaven – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was raised up into Paradise – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows – and he heard ineffable words, which man is not allowed to express – (et audivit arcane verba, quae non licet homini loqui -- kai ekousen arreta remata, ha ouk exon anthropo lalesai) –" (2 Corinthians xii, 2-4)

Saint PAUL was therefore carried up to the third heaven or the third macrocosmic sphere and he was then raised up into Paradise where he heard ineffable words . . . His macrocosmic initiation through ecstasy therefore took place in the sphere of Paradise, the conscious experience of which – "he heard ineffable words" – is its aim, just as it is also the aim of initiation through enstasy, which latter is characterized by experience of the primordial layer at the root of the human being or microcosm. The macrocosmic sphere of Paradise and the microcosmic layer of Eden are the "initia", the beginnings, to which one is initiated in the macrocosmic initiation as well as in the microcosmic initiation. Ecstasy to the heights beyond oneself and enstasy into the depths within oneself lead to knowledge of the same fundamental truth.

Christian esotericism unites these two methods of initiation. The Master has two groups of disciples – "disciples of the day" and "disciples of the night" – the first being disciples of the way of enstasy and the latter those of the way of ecstasy. He has also a third group of disciples "of day and night", i.e. who possess the keys to both doors at once, to the door of ecstasy and that of enstasy. Thus, the apostle John, author of the Gospel of the Word made Flesh, was at the same time he who listened to the heart of the Master. He had the twofold experience – microcosmic and macrocosmic – of the cosmic Word and the Sacred Heart, of which the litany says: "Cor Jesu, rex et centrum omnium cordium" ("Heart of Jesus, king and center of all hearts"). It is thanks to this twofold experience that the Gospel which he wrote is at one and the same time so cosmic and so humanly intimate – of such heights and depths simultaneously. There, the macrocosmic solar sphere and the microcosmic solar sphere are united, which explains the singular magic of this Gospel.

For the reality of Paradise is the unity of the macrocosmic solar sphere and the microcosmic solar layer – the sphere of the cosmic heart and the solar foundation of the human heart. Christian initiation is the conscious experience of the heart of the world

and the solar nature of man. G o d - M a n is the Initiator, and there is no other.

What we understand by the term "Initiator" is what the early Christians understood by the word "Kyrios", "Dominus" or "Lord". With this, Christian esotericism or Hermeticism is in full accord - with absolute sincerity, today as in the past - when the words of the Creed are recited in church:

"Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum,
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula, Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero,
Genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri
per quem omnia facta sunt;
Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis.
Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
ex Maria Virgine: et homo factus est."

"We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate:
from the Virgin Mary, and was made man."

We bow with respect and gratitude before all the great human souls of the past and present - the sages, the righteous, the prophets, the saints of all continents and all epochs throughout the whole of human history - and we are ready to learn from them all that they wish and are able to teach, but we have only one sole Initiator or Lord; we are obliged to reiterate this for the sake of certainty.

But let us return to the theme of Paradise.

"Paradise" is therefore at one and the same time the fundamental layer of our soul and a cosmic sphere. One finds it just as well through enstasy as by ecstasy. It is the realm of beginning, and therefore of principles. Above we came across the principle of the three vows: obedience, poverty and chastity. Paradise, being the realm of beginning and principles, is at the same time that of the beginning of the "Fall" or the principle of temptation, i.e. the principle of transition from obedience to disobedience, from poverty to greed, and from chastity to unchastity.

The temptation in Paradise was threefold, just as was the temptation of Jesus Christ in the wilderness. The following are the essential elements of the triple temptation in Paradise, as it is described in the account of the Fall in the book of Genesis:

1. Eve listened to the voice of the Serpent;
2. She s a w that the tree "was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes";
3. She t o o k of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate.

The voice of the Serpent is that of the living being ("animal") whose intelligence is most advanced ("the most artful") amongst all living beings ("animals") whose consciousness is turned towards the horizontal ("animals of the fields"). Now, the intelligence of Adam-Eve was, before the Fall, vertical; their eyes had not yet been "opened", and they "were both naked, and were not ashamed", i.e. they were conscious of everything vertically – from above to below or, in other words, in God, through God and for God. They were not conscious of "naked" things, i.e. things separated from God. The formula expressing their perception, their vision of things was: "That which is above is as that which is below, and that which is below is as that which is above". Thus, although they "were both naked", they "were not ashamed". Because they saw divine ideality expressing itself through phenomenal reality. It was vertical con-sciousness (simultaneous knowledge of the ideal and the real), whose principles are found formulated in the Emerald Table. The formula of horizontal consciousness of the Serpent (Nahasch) would be that of realism, pure and simple:- "That which is in me is as that which is outside of me, and that which is outside of me is as that which is in me". This is horizontal con-sciousness (simultaneous knowledge of the subjective and the objective), which sees things not in God, but separated from Him or "naked" – within itself, through itself and for itself. And as the "self" here replaces God (horizontal consciousness being that of the opposition of subject and object), the Serpent says that on the day when Adam-Eve (Adam and Eve) eat fruit from the tree which is in the middle of the garden, their eyes will open as they will be as gods, i.e. the "self" will replace the function previously filled by God and that they will know good and evil. If before they saw things in divine light, they will see them now in their own light, i.e. the function of illumination will belong to them, just as it once belonged to God.

The source of the light will be transferred from God to man.

This was the temptation that Eve heard in listening to the voice of the Serpent. Its essence is the principle of p o w e r, which is autonomy of the light of consciousness. And Eve listened to the voice of the Serpent. This voice was as audible to her as the other Voice bearing from above the single commandment: You may eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for on the day that you eat of it you shall die".

She therefore heard t w o voices, two inspirations arising from contrary sources. Here is the origin and the principle of d o u b t. Doubt is twofold inspiration. F a i t h is a single inspiration. Certainty is vanquished doubt; it is faith regained.

Obedience, the principle of Obedience, is devotion without reserve to the sole voice from above. Now, the very fact that Eve listened to another voice than that from above, that she compared the two voices, i.e. considered them as if they belonged to the same plane (and therefore she doubted), this very fact was an act of spiritual disobedience and was the root cause and beginning of the Fall.

It was then that she looked at the tree and saw that it "was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes" – this was the second phase of the temptation and the second

stage of the Fall. For it was after having listened to the voice of the Serpent that she looked at the tree. She looked at it in a new way – no longer as formerly, when the sole Voice from above vibrated in her being, when she experienced not the least attraction for the tree, but rather now with the word of the Serpent vibrating in her being – with a questioning, comparing, doubting look, i.e. ready to have experience. Because when one is in doubt, one is induced to make experiments in order to dispel it – if one does not surmount it by raising oneself to a higher plane.

It was in looking at the tree in this new way that it appeared to her "good for food, and a delight to the eyes". To be induced to seek experience is the beginning and the principle of greed, the principle opposed to Poverty.

It was after having looked at the tree in a new way that Eve stretched forth her hand and "she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate". Here is the third phase of the temptation and the third stage of the Fall: it is to escape from doubt by plunging into experience and making the other take part.

Here is the beginning and the principle of unchastity, contrary to the principle of Chastity. Because to seek experiences or to make experiments based on doubt is the very essence of carnal, psychic and spiritual unchastity. For this reason one does not carry out experiments in Christian esotericism or Hermeticism. One would never take recourse to experiments with a view to dispelling doubt. One has experiences, of course, but one does not make experiments. Because it would be contrary to the holy vow of Chastity to put forward a hand and to take from the tree of knowledge. The spiritual world does not in any way suffer experimenters. One seeks, one asks, one knocks at its door. But one does not open it by force. One waits for it to be opened.

The Christian doctrine and experience of Grace expresses the very essence of Chastity, just as it contains the principles of Poverty and Obedience. It is doctrine concerning chaste relationships between that which is below and that which is above. God is not an object and neither is He an object of knowledge. He is the source of illuminatory and revelatory grace. He cannot be grasped, but he can certainly reveal himself.

Here we have Chastity, Poverty and Obedience underlying the Christian doctrine and experience of Grace. Now, all Christian esotericism or Hermeticism, including here all its mysticism, gnosis and magic, is founded on the experience and doctrine of grace, one of the results of which is initiation. Initiation is an act of grace from above. It cannot be achieved or produced by any technical outer or inner procedures. One does not initiate oneself; one becomes initiated.

G r a c e .... are we not tired of the age-old repetition of this subject in Sunday sermons in church, in theological treatises, in the writings of mystics and, lastly, in the pompous declarations of monarchs – be they "High-Christian", "Catholic", "Orthodox" or "defenders of the Faith"? Have we not heard and read about it to the point of satiety... whenever and wherever the perfume of incense is smelled and spiritual hymns are heard?

Lastly, is not a disciple of modern Hermeticism – he who is getting ready to dare the great adventure of the quest for the Great Arcanum – in the right to ask that he be spared sermons on this mollifying and monotonous subject? Does it not presume too little of his character to invite him to renounce the magnificent magical quaternary – "to dare, to will, to be silent, and to know" – for the whining "Kyrie eleison"?

There is nothing more banal than the rising of the sun which repeats itself day after day throughout innumerable millions of years... Yet it is thanks to this banal phenomenon that our eyes – organs for the light of the sun – see all the new things that life brings. Just as the light of the sun renders seeing with regard to things of the physical world, so does the light of the spiritual sun – G r a c e – render us seeing with regard to what is brought about from the spiritual world. Light is necessary in order to be able to see, there as well as here.

Similarly, air is necessary in order to breathe and to live. Is not the air which surrounds us a perfect analogy for the "gratia gratis data" – for gratuitously bestowed grace? Because to live in the spirit, vivifying spirit is necessary, which is the air of spiritual respiration.

Can one produce artificially intellectual, moral or artistic <u>inspiration</u>? Can the lungs produce the air which they need for respiration?

Now, the <u>principle</u> of grace underlies earthly life as well as spiritual life. It is wholly – below and above – ruled by the <u>laws</u> of Obedience, Poverty and Chastity. The lungs know that it is necessary to breathe – and they obey. The lungs know that they are in want – and they breathe in. They love purity – and they breathe out. The very process of breathing teaches the laws of Obedience, Poverty and Chastity, i.e. it is a lesson (by analogy) in Grace. Conscious breathing in of the reality of Grace is Christian "Hatha-Yoga". Christian "Hatha-Yoga" is the <u>vertical</u> breathing of Prayer and Benediction – or, in other words, one opens oneself to Grace and one receives it.

With respect to the magnificent quaternary of traditional magic: "to dare, to will, to be silent, and to know", it is formulated – mutandis mutatis – by the Master in the following way: "Ask, and it will be given you;
Seek, and you will find;
Knock, and it will be opened to you.
For everyone who asks receives,
And he who seeks finds,
And to him who knocks it will be opened. (Matthew vii, 7-8)

It is a matter of daring to ask, of the will to seek, of being silent in order to knock, and of knowing when it is opened to you. For knowledge does not happen automatically; it is what is revealed when the door is opened.

This is the formula of the synthesis of effort and grace, of the principle of work and that of receptivity, and, lastly, of merit and gift. This synthesis enunciates the absolute law of all spiritual progress and, consequently, all spiritual discipline, whether it be practiced by a solitary Christian Hermeticist, or by a community in a cloister or convent, or by a

religious or mystical order, or by any esoteric or Christian-Hermetic fraternity. It is the law which every Christian disciple, of every Christian spiritual school, obeys. And Christian Hermeticism, i.e. the whole of traditional mysticism, gnosis, magic and occult philosophy, passed through baptism and transfiguration by the fire, light and life of Christianity, is in no way an exception here. Hermeticism without grace is only sterile erudite historicism; Hermeticism without effort is only superficial sentimental aestheticism. There is certainly THE WORK in Hermeticism, and this work is the child of Grace and effort.

Dear Unknown Friend, if you have knowledge of theology, you will recognize here the pure and simple doctrine of the Catholic Church concerning the relationship between work and Grace. You find here again the rejection of Pelagianism, according to which it is only work (or effort) which counts, and also of Luther's Protestantism, according to which it is only Grace which counts. You find here the doctrine of the Catholic Church that "natura vulnerata, non deleta" is also implied, i.e. that Nature is not entirely corrupt in consequence of the Fall, but that it preserves a virgin element and that consequently there is also an element in human nature which is therefore capable of effort and work which counts.

Thus, does Christian Hermeticism simply borrow the fundamental principles of its Hermetic-philosophical teaching from Catholic theology?

It should not be forgotten that Christian Hermeticism is not a religion apart, nor a church apart, nor even a science apart, which would compete with religion, with the Church, or with science. It is the connecting link (hyphen) between mysticism, gnosis and magic, expressed through symbolism – symbolism being the means of expression of the dimensions of depth and height (and therefore of enstasy and ecstasy), of all that is universal (which corresponds to the dimension of breadth), and of all that is traditional (corresponding to the dimension of length). Being Christian, Hermeticism accepts the cross of the Universality, the Tradition, the Depth and the Height of Christianity, in the sense of the apostle Paul when he said: "That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend (com-prehend) with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Ephesians iii, 18-19)

This is the complete formula of initiation.

Now, in aspiring to knowledge and experience of the Depth and Height of Universal Christianity – i.e. Catholic and Traditional, that is, of the Church – Hermeticism borrows nothing and cannot borrow anything from the Church, since it is nothing other, and is unable to be anything other, than an aspect of the Church itself, namely the aspect of its dimension of of depth and height. It is therefore flesh of its flesh and blood of its blood; it does not borrow from the Church, since it is part of it. It is the invisible aspect of Universality (in space) and Tradition (in time), both of which become visible in the Church. For the Church is not only universal and traditional, but also profound and sublime. Now, Christian Hermeticism is only the vertical aspect, i.e. that of depth and height, of the Church. This in no

way means to say that individual Hermeticists will be in possession of all that is profound and sublime (i.e. all the esotericism) of the Church; it means to say only that one is a Christian Hermeticist in so far as one has consciousness of the depth and the height of the universal tradition of Christianity and that each person who has this experience and consciousness represents Christian Hermeticism. Then, are all the Church doctors who teach the way of spiritual experience beyond theoretical theology, and all the saints and mystics of the Church who have had this experience, at the same time Hermeticists? Yes, they are in so far as they are witnesses and representatives of the profound and sublime in Christianity. They all have much to say to modern Hermeticists, who have much to learn from them. Take for example "De triplici via" ("The Threefold Way") by St. BONAVENTURA, Chapter iii, 14. There you will read :-

"Note, lastly, what the Truth must be :-

1°- in the first Hierarchy: evoked by the utterance of prayer,
work of the Angels;
heard in study and reading,
work of the Archangels;
announced through example and preaching,
work of the Principalities.

2°- in the second Hierarchy: joined with as refuge and place of indulgence,
work of the Powers;
apprehended through zeal and emulation,
work of the Virtues;
conjoined with in self-deprecation and mortification,
work of the Dominions.

3°- in the third Hierarchy :- worshipped through sacrifice and praise,
work of the Thrones;
admired through ecstasy (going out of oneself) and contemplation,
work of the Cherubim;
embraced in kiss and dilection
(amplectanda per osculum et dilectionem),
work of the Seraphim.

Note diligently what I say here, because this is
a fountain of life."

Just a brief fragment to furnish material for years of meditation! Can one, being a Hermeticist, allow oneself to ignore such testimonies (and there are hundreds of them) of the spiritual world and its authentic experience? Fabre d'OLIVET, Eliphas LÉVI, Saint-YVES d'ALVEYDRE, GUAITA, PAPUS and PÉLADAN certainly merit being studied — just as do so many others of Hermetic and occult movements — but studying them alone does not suffice. Are they the only authentic witnesses and are their works the only

first-hand sources of the reality of the spiritual world and experience of it? Let us therefore take heed of all those who know through experience, and let us seek in the first place for the authenticity of the experience instead of for erudition and theoretical speculation.

But let us return to the theme of temptation. It is threefold as we have seen. We are able therefore to speak of t h r e e fundamental temptations which relate to the three fundamental conditions of the state of Grace from Paradise, or to the three vows which form the basis of all spiritual culture following the Fall: Obedience, Poverty and Chastity. This is the practical meaning of the hexagram or the Seal of Solomon: This seal is that of the memory of Paradise and the Fall, i.e. it concerns the Law or T o r a h. For the Law is the child of Paradise and the Temptation.

Since the New Alliance is the fulfillment of the Old, the work of redemption began with the repetition of the three primordial temptations. But this time it was the Son of Man who was tempted, and the temptation took place not in the garden of Eden, but rather in a terrestrial wilderness. And this time it was not the Serpent, "the most artful amongst animals of the fields", who tempted him, but the Prince of this World, i.e. the "new man", the "superman" or the other "son of man" – who, if incarnated, would be the realization of the promise of freedom made by the Serpent. Antichrist, the ideal of biological and historical evolution without grace, is not an individuality or entity created by God, but rather the egregore or phantom generated through the biological and historical evolution opened up by the Serpent, who is the author and master of the biological and historical evolution that science studies and teaches. The Antichrist is the ultimate product of this evolution without grace and not an entity created by God – the act of divine creation being always, without exception, an act of grace. He is therefore an egregore, an artificial being who owes his existence to collective generation from below.

Let us ponder, therefore, on the notion of egregore with a view to understanding better what the Antichrist is – this important and enigmatic figure of esotericism and Christian Hermeticism, who is at the same time the source of the temptation in the wilderness.

To begin with, here is what Robert AMBELAIN says in "La Kabbale pratique":–

"One gives the name of Egregore to a Force generated by a powerful spiritual current and then nourished at regular intervals, according to a rhythm in harmony with the Universal Life of the Cosmos, or to a union of Entities united by a common characteristic nature." (Robert Ambelain, "La Kabbale pratique", Paris, 1951, p.175)

This is a definition which leaves nothing more to be desired. It is unfortunately muddled up by the paragraph which immediately follows:

"In the Invisible, beyond the physical perception of Man, exist artificial beings – generated by devotion, enthusiasm and fanaticism – that one names egregores. These are the souls of great spiritual currents, good or evil. The Mystical Church,

Heavenly Jerusalem, the Body of Christ and all these synonymous names are the epithets that one commonly gives to the egregore of Catholicism. Freemasonry, Protestantism, Islam, Buddhism are egregores. Great political ideologies are other egregores." (ibid., p.175)

Here is a singular mixture of truth and falsehood. What is true here is that invisible artificial collectively-engendered beings exist, i.e. that egregores are real; but what is false is the confusion of things which are of an entirely different nature (the "Body of Christ" and "political ideologies"!) without distinguishing the substance here. Because if one classifies the Mystical Church, the Body of Christ, Freemasonry and Buddhism as "egregores", i.e. as "artificial beings generated by devotion, enthusiasm and fanaticism", why not consider God also as an egregore?

No, there are superhuman spiritual entities which are not artificially engendered, but which manifest themselves and reveal themselves. The confusion between that which descends from above and that which is engendered from below is, moreover, very widespread among materialistic scientists as also among occultists. Thus, many biologists consider the unity of consciousness – or the human soul – as the epiphenomenon or sum-product of millions of points of consciousness belonging to the cells of the organism's nervous system. For them the "soul" is only an egregore engendered collectively by millions of individual cells. But this is not so. The egregore of the cells certainly exists – this is the phantom, of an electromagnetic nature, which resists decomposition after death for some time and which can manifest in "haunted houses", etc. But this phantom has nothing to do either with the soul itself or with the subtle bodies (etheric or life body, and astral or soul body) with which the soul is clothed in addition to the physical body.

Now, to say that the Mystical Church or the Body of Christ, for example, is an egregore is to advance the thesis that it is a phantom engendered by millions of believers, just as the phantoms of the dead are engendered by millions of cells. The confusion of the soul and the phantom is a sufficiently serious error. No less serious is the case of confusion of revelations and inventions – of spiritual beings who reveal themselves from above, and egregores engendered artifically from below. Because egregores, as powerful as they may be, have only an ephemeral existence, whose duration depends entirely on galvanizing nourishment on the part of their creators. However, it is the souls and spirits from above – forming, inspiring and directing communities of human beings – who nourish and vivify human souls: for example, Archangels (who are the spirits of nations); Principalities (Archai) or "time spirits"; the spiritual entity which is behind Tibetan Buddhism; not to mention Christ, whose Flesh and Blood each day vivifies and unites the Church (Christ's Mystical Body). Egregores are therefore nourished by men, while the latter are nourished by souls and spirits from above.

Nevertheless, although God, Christ, the Holy Virgin, the spiritual hierarchies, the saints, the Church or the Mystical Body of Christ are real entities, there still exists also a phantom or

egregore of the Church, which is its "double", just as every man, every nation, every religion, etc., have their "doubles". But just as he who sees in Russia, for example, only the bear, in France only the cock and in Germany only the wolf, is being unfair towards the country of the Heart, the country of Intelligence and the country of Initiative -- so is one being unjust towards the Catholic Church when one sees, instead of the Mystical Body of Christ, only its historical phantom - the fox. In order to see rightly one has to look rightly. And to look rightly means to endeavor to see through the mists of the phantoms of things. This is one of the principal practical precepts of Christian Hermeticism. It is thanks to the effort to see through the phantoms that one arrives at knowledge of the depth and height spoken of by the apostle Paul, which is the very essence of Hermeticism.

Regarding the Antichrist, this is <u>the phantom of the whole of mankind</u>, the being engendered through the whole historical evolution of humanity. He is the "superman" who haunts the consciousness of all those who seek to elevate themselves through their own effort, without grace. He appeared to Friedrich NIETZSCHE and showed him "in an instant all the kingdoms of the world" which have existed, exist and will exist, in the circle of eternal return (die ewige Wiederkehr); he invited him to cast himself down into the domain which is beyond good and evil (jenseits von Gut und Böse), and to embrace and announce the gospel of <u>Evolution</u>, the gospel of the will-to-power (Wille zur Macht) - <u>this</u>, and this alone ("Gott ist tot...", i.e. "God is dead"), transforms stone (inorganic matter) into bread (organic matter), and organic matter into animal, and animal into man, and man into superman (Übermensch), who is beyond good and evil and who obeys only his own will ("O mein Wille, meine Notwendigkeit, du bist mein Gesetz...").

He appeared to Karl MARX and showed him "in an instant all the kingdoms of the world" where all the slaves of the past are transformed into sovereign masters who no longer obey either God, having dethroned him, or Nature, having subjugated her, and who eat their bread which they owe solely to their own knowledge and effort in transforming stone into bread.

And the Phantom of Humanity has appeared to many others.

He appeared also to the Son of Man in the desert.

This was the meeting of divine Law made flesh and the law of the Serpent - biological and historical evolution - made soul.

Divine Law is grace; it is the activity descending from the Holy Trinity which was revealed forty days before the Temptation in the wilderness, when the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan was accomplished by John the Baptist. The law of the Serpent is the action of the will moving gropingly forward, snaking through epochs and layers of biological evolution, passing from form to form; it is the triad of the will-to-power, the "groping trial" and the transformation of that which is gross into that which is subtle.

Vertical trinitarian Grace and the triadic spirit of horizontal Evolution met, therefore,

in the consciousness of the Son of Man forty days after the baptism in the Jordan. Then the three temptations of the Son of Man took place. And just as the baptism in the Jordan is the prototype of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, so is the meeting of Grace (received at the baptism in the Jordan) with the quintessence of the evolutionary impulse since the Fall the prototype of the Holy Sacrament of Confirmation. For it is then that Grace from above is firmly established against the law from below. It is then that Evolution gives way to Grace.

The three temptations of the Son of Man in the wilderness were his experience of the directing impulses of evolution, namely the will-to-power, the "groping trial" and the transformation of the gross into the subtle. They signify at the same time the test of the three vows – the vows of Obedience, Chastity and Poverty.

It is with the last trial that Matthew (chap. 4) begins his account of the temptation of Jesus Christ. For the celestial fullness (pleroma) which descended at the time of the baptism in the Jordan brought with it the corresponding terrestrial emptiness (kenoma), which is expressed in the Gospel account by the solitude, the wilderness and the fasting.

"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And he fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was hungry."

Now, <u>hunger</u> of the spirit, the soul and the body is the experience of <u>emptiness</u> or poverty. It is therefore the vow of Poverty which is put to the test when the tempter -- "came and said to him: If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread". "Command these stones to become loaves of bread... This is the very essence of the aspiration of humanity in the scientific epoch, namely to victory over poverty. Synthetic resins, synthetic rubber, synthetic fiber, synthetic vitamins, synthetic proteins and... eventually synthetic bread!? – When? Soon, perhaps. Who knows?

Command these stones to become bread.. This is the formula of evolution in the sense of transformism belonging to the mentality of some academics, who teach that the plant kingdom, i.e. <u>bread</u>, is only a transformation of the mineral kingdom, i.e. "these stones", and that consequently organic matter – bread – is only the result of the physical and chemical regrouping of little molecules into giant molecules ("macromolecules") in the process of polymerization. "Polymerization" is therefore considered today by a number of scientists as the possible – even probable – equivalent of the operation proposed by the tempter in the wilderness, namely the transformation of stones into bread.

The operation proposed by the tempter is at the same time the dominant motif of the doctrines overrunning the world today which regard the economic life as primary and the spiritual life as its epiphenomenon or as an "ideological superstructure" upon the economic basis. That which is below is primary and that which is above is secondary, since it is matter which engenders spirit – such is the dogma commonly underlying "economicism" and "transformism", and the statement made by the tempter to the Son of Man. And this was his reply to this dogma: – "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word

that proceeds from the mouth of God".

Let us ponder on this formula.

It expresses, in the first place, the essence of the vow of Poverty. For the vow of Poverty is to live as much from the word which comes from the mouth of God as from the bread which enters the mouth of man.

Then it adds to the law of biological nourishment, where the kingdoms lower than man serve him food, the new law of Grace, where it is the kingdom higher than man, the kingdom of heaven, which feeds him. This means to say that not only the spirit and the soul of man are able to live, i.e. to receive impulses, forces and substances from above, but also his body. The vivifying spiritual effect of divine Magic or Grace with respect to the spiritual and psychic life is the millennial-old common experience of sincere Christians, but it is less known that there were — and there are — cases where the body itself can go without any food for a lapse of time sufficient to cause death from biological hunger a hundredfold. Thus, Teresa NEUMANN lived in our time at Konnersreuth (Bavaria) solely from Holy Communion for decades; St. CATHERINE of SIENNA lived nine years from Holy Communion alone; St. LIDVINA of Schiedam (near Rotterdam, Holland) likewise lived for many years exclusively from Holy Communion — to cite only the cases that are well-verified.

This is the significance of the words: "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God". Here is its principal implication: as the law of evolution, the law of the Serpent, comprises the struggle for existence and as "bread" or food is the principal factor in the struggle for existence, the fact of the entry of Grace into human history since Jesus Christ signifies at the same time the possibility of gradually abolishing the struggle for existence. It is therefore the vow of Poverty which will abolish it.

> "Then the devil took him to the holy city, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him: If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written: He will give his angels charge of you and on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone. Jesus said to him: Again, it is written: You shall not tempt the Lord your God!"

This is the "groping trial", to which natural evolution owes much, which speaks this time. It is the method of so-called natural evolution which has replaced since the Fall the world created by God or Paradise. Because evolution proceeds gropingly from form to form, trying and rejecting, then trying anew.. The world of evolution from protozoa to vertebrates and from vertebrates to mammals and then to apes and to pithecanthropus... is neither the accomplishment of absolute wisdom nor absolute goodness. It is rather the work of a really vast intelligence and a very resolute will pursuing a definite aim determined by the method of "trial and error". One could say that it is a matter more of a great scientific intellect and the will of an experimenter which is revealed in natural evolution (the existence of which one can no longer deny), rather than divine wisdom and goodness. The tableau of evolution that the natural sciences — above all biology — have at last obtained

as the result of prodigious work reveals to us without any doubt the work of a very subtle, but imperfect, intellect and a very determined, but imperfect, will. It is therefore the Serpent, "the most artful animal of the fields", that the world of biological evolution reveals to us, and not God. It is the Serpent who is the "Prince of this world", and who is the author and director of the purely biological evolution following the Fall. Read "Le Phénomène humain" ("The Phenomenon of Man") by Pierre TEILHARD de CHARDIN, which gives the best summary and interpretation that I know of natural evolution; study this book and you could not arrive at any other conclusion than that the world of evolution is the work of the Serpent of Paradise, and that it is only since the prophetic religions (of which there many) and Christianity that the Good News (E v a n g e l i o n) of another way than that of the evolution of the Serpent exists.

Now, the tempter proposed to the Son of Man the method to which he owes his existence -- the t r i a l. "Throw yourself down and it will be seen if it is true that you are the Son of God and that you are not as I am, the son of evolution, son of the Serpent." This was the temptation of Chastity. For, as we have shown above, the spirit of Chastity excludes all trial. The trial is the very essence of what the Bible designates as "fornication". Fornication -- as, moreover, every other vice and also every virtue -- is threefold: spiritual, psychic and carnal. Its root is spiritual; the region of its deployment and growth is that of the soul; and the flesh is simply the domain where it fructifies. It is thus that spiritual error becomes vice and vice becomes sickness.

For this reason the prophets of Israel stigmatized the spiritual fornication of the people of the Old Alliance each time that they let themselves be seduced by the cults of "strange gods" - Bel, Moloch, and Astarte. These gods were only egregores, creatures of the collective human imagination and will, while the Holy One of Israel was the revealed God - unimaginable though He was - having no other relationship with the human will than that of the Law imposed on it. This is why the "strange gods" had a singular attraction for the Israelites, being the gods "of this world" and not the transcendent God of revelation, obedience to which was to return to live in a spiritual monastery in relation to "this world and its gods". They were always being tempted to throw themselves from the height and isolation of the pinnacle of the temple above into the layers of collective instinct below, and to test whether there would be "angels who will bear you up lest you strike your foot against a stone" -- i.e. to try and find in the near and dense layers of the forces of natural evolution directing and protecting forces with less effort than in the height and rare air surrounding the pinnacle of the revealed God's temple. The principle of spiritual fornication is therefore the preference of the subconscious to the conscious and superconscious, of instinct to the Law, and of the world of the Serpent to the world of the WORD.

Just as the first two temptations are directed at the vows of holy Poverty and holy Chastity, so is the third temptation (according to the Gospel of Matthew) directed at the vow of holy Obedience. This time it is a matter of the will-to-power, the Nietzschean "Wille zur Macht".

"Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to him: All these I will give you, if you fall down and worship me. Then Jesus said to him: Begone, Satan! for it is written: You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."

Let us note the elements of this temptation: the very high mountain, all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, worship of he who has the power to rise to the top of the mountain and there to give possession of everything in the kingdoms of his world.

It is a matter, therefore, of accepting the ideal of the Superman ("fall down and worship me"), who is the summit of evolution ("he took him to a very high mountain") and who, having passed through the mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms, subjecting them to his power, is Lord over them -- i.e. he is their final cause or aim and ideal, their representative or their collective concentrated will, and he is their master, who has taken their subsequent evolution into his hands. Now, the choice here is between the ideal of the Superman, who is "as God", and God himself.

Holy Obedience is therefore faithfulness to the living God himself; revolt or disobedience is the decision taken in favor of the Superman, who personifies the ideal of the will-to-power.

The sixth Arcanum of the Tarot "The Lover", although it puts in relief only the temptation of Chastity, evokes the whole range of ideas of the three temptations and the three vows – with the three temptations in Paradise and those in the wilderness being inseparable in reality – just as the three vows are also. Because one cannot be "chaste" without being "poor" and "obedient", just as one cannot renounce the divine ideal in favor of the ideal of the superman without at the same time falling into the region of trial (experimentation), where there is no immediate certainty, and into the region of the law of the Serpent formulated as follows: "You shall go upon your belly and you shall eat dust all the days of your life", i.e. the region where there is no Grace.

But what is the immediate consequence of resisting temptation? The Gospel account gives the answer here, as follows:-

"Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him".

This response belongs to the range of ideas and facts of the seventh Arcanum of the Tarot "The Chariot" whose card represents a man standing on a triumphal chariot drawn by two horses.

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Letter VII: Meditation on the seventh Major Arcanum of the Tarot - "THE CHARIOT"
"LE CHARIOT"

Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him.
(Matthew iv,11)

When the unclean spirit has gone out of man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest; and finding none he says: I will return to my house from whence I came.

And when he comes he finds it swept and put in order.

Then he goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. (Luke xi, 24-26)

I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. (John v, 43)

Dear Unknown Friend,

Like the preceding arcana, the Arcanum "The Chariot" has a twofold aspect. It represents, from one side, he who - having triumphed over the three temptations - remains faithful to the vows of Obedience, Poverty and Chastity; and it represents, from another side, the danger of the <u>fourth temptation</u>, which is the most subtle and intimate temptation, and is the invisible synthesis of the three temptations: the spiritual temptation of the victorious through his victory itself. It is the temptation to act "in one's own name", to act as master instead of servant.

The seventh Arcanum is that of <u>mastership</u> understood in the sense of temptation as well as achievement. The three Gospel quotations which are found at the head of this Letter delineate the nature of the ideas here.

Paul MARTEAU says that the general and abstract meaning of the seventh Card is that it "represents <u>setting in motion in seven states</u>, i.e. in all domains" - ("Le Tarot de Marseille", Paris, 1949, p.33), and it is exactly this that we have designated above as "mastership". For mastership is not the state of being moved, but rather that of being able to set in motion.

The Son of Man resisted being moved by the three temptations in the wilderness;

consequently, it is he who set in motion the forces which served him. "Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him".

Here, again, is a fundamental law of sacred Magic. One could formulate it in the following way: That which is above being as that which is below, renunciation below sets in motion forces of accomplishment above and the renunciation of that which is above sets in motion forces of accomplishment below. What is the practical meaning of this law?

It is the following.

When you resist a temptation or renounce something desired below, you set in motion by this very fact forces of realization of that which corresponds above to that which you come to renounce below. It is this that the Master designates by the word "reward" when he says, for example, that it is necessary to guard against practicing righteousness before other people in order to gain their regard, "for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew vi,1). Reward is therefore the action that one sets in motion above by the renunciation of desire for things below. It is the "yes" from above corresponding to the "no" from below. And this correspondence constitutes a basis for magical realization and for a fundamental law of Christian esotericism or Hermeticism. Let us guard ourselves from taking it lightly, for here is given to us one of the principal keys of sacred Magic. It is not desire which bears magical realization, but rather the renunciation of desire (that you have formerly experienced, of course). For renunciation through indifference has no moral - and therefore no magical - value.

Desire, and then renounce — here we have the practical magical meaning of the "law" of reward. To say that one has to renounce what one desires amounts to saying that one has to practice the three sacred vows - Obedience, Poverty and Chastity. For the renunciation must be sincere in order for it to set in motion the forces of realization from above, and it cannot be so when it lacks the air, light and warmth of the sacred vows. It is necessary therefore to understand once and for all that there is no true sacred magic — nor mysticism, gnosis or Hermeticism - outside of the three sacred vows, and that true magical training is essentially only the practice of the three vows. Is this hard? No, it is easy, it is the "concentration without effort" which was considered in the first of these Letters.

Let us now consider the text of the Gospel account concerning what happened immediately after the three temptations. "Then the devil left him" (tote aphiesin auton ho diabolos) says the Gospel according to Matthew, but the Gospel according to Luke adds "for a time". Now, these additional words give rise to the supposition that again a trial or temptation — the fourth, which is the most subtle and intimate — is to come. And it is this which forms part of the teaching of the seventh Arcanum, which represents a crowned man standing on a triumphal chariot drawn by two horses.

"And behold, angels came ... to him" (kai idou angeloi proselthon), i.e. now they were able to approach him, since a "space" necessary for their descent became free. Why and how?

Angels (ἄγγελοι hoi angeloi, in Greek) are entities which move vertically, from above below and from below above. "To move" signifies for them "to change respiration", and

"distance" for them amounts to the number – and to the intensity of effort that it comprises – of changes from inhalation to exhalation. Thus, for example, when we say, "a distance of 300 kilometers from the earth", an angel would say, "three successive changes from normal respiration in the sphere of the angels". "To draw near" for angels signifies a change in respiration; "to be unable to draw near" means to say that the "atmosphere" of the sphere which they want to draw near to is such that they can no longer breathe there, and that they would "faint" if they were to enter this sphere.

This is why the angels were unable to approach the Son of Man during the time when the concentrated forces of terrestrial evolution – the forces of the "son of the Serpent" – were active. They "occupied", so to say, the space around the Son of Man, so that the angels were unable to breathe – and therefore they were unable to enter there without "fainting". But "immediately" that "the devil left him" (Luke) and the atmosphere changed, they <u>were able to</u> approach him, and did so.

One can add, by way of a corollary, that the "law of presence" delineated above gives us a strong reason for acknowledging the necessity of churches, temples and consecrated or holy places in general. There are certainly other reasons again, but this would suffice, even if there were no other reasons, for us to defend the protection of all sacred places. Let us therefore protect through our thoughts, words and deeds, all churches, every chapel and, lastly, every temple, where one prays, worships, meditates, and celebrates God and his servants!

"...And they ministered to him" (kai diekonoun auto). The plural "they" indicates to us that it is a matter here of t h r e e angels. Each temptation resisted corresponded to an angel charged with the special mission of reward and who rendered a special s e r v i c e.

What, therefore, were these services?

He had refused – he, being famished – to command stones to become bread; now, it was "the word which comes from the mouth of God", become bread, which the angel of Poverty served him.

He had refused to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple; now, it was breath from the height of the throne of God that the angel of Chastity brought to him.

He had refused to accept the role of Superman – to be king of the world at the price of worshipping the ideal of the world of the Serpent; now, it was the royal crown of the world of God that the angel of Obedience presented him.

Just as the t h r e e M a g e s offered their presents to the new-born Child – gold, frankincense and myrrh – so did the three Angels each offer a present to the Master, after his Baptism in the Jordan and his Confirmation in the wilderness: the crown of gold, the breath of incense from the Throne of God and the divine word become food.

This is what happened <u>immediately</u> after the three temptations in the wilderness. This was the response from above to the threefold renunciation by the Son of Man below. But what was the effect of the vanquished temptations not only for the vanquisher himself and not only immediately, but also for the outside world of the so-called "four elements" and in

the course of time?

The effect here was mastership of the world of the elements, and what took place in the course of time was the seven archetypal miracles described in the Gospel according to John, i.e. the miracle at the wedding of Cana, the miracle of the healing of the nobleman's son, the miracle of the healing of the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda, the miracle of the multiplying of the loaves of bread (the feeding of the five thousand), the miracle of walking on the water, the miracle of the healing of the man born blind, and the miracle of the raising of Lazarus at Bethany. And to the manifestation of these seven aspects of mastership or "glory" there corresponds the revelation of the seven aspects of the Name of the Master: - "I am the true vine", "I am the way, the truth and the life", "I am the door", "I am the bread of life", "I am the good shepherd", "I am the light of the world" and "I am the resurrection and the life". This is the rainbow of seven colors of the manifestation of "glory" or mastership and also the octave of the seven tones of revelation of the "name" or mission of the Vanquisher of the three temptations. And this rainbow shone around the empty and somber place in the wilderness where these temptations took place.

The seven miracles of the Gospel according to John are, in their totality, the "glory" (doxa) or splendor of the victory of the three sacred vows over the three temptations. Here there is at the same time a beautiful piece of qualitative mathematics: the threefold good, when it prevails over the threefold evil, produces s e v e n f o l d good, while when the the threefold evil prevails over the threefold good, it produces only threefold evil. For the good is only qualitative, and when it is able to manifest itself, it manifests itself wholly, in its indivisible fullness. This is what the number seven is - fullness (pleroma) or, when it manifests itself - glory (doxa), which St. John speaks of when he says: "and we have beheld his glory" and "from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace" (John i, 14 and 16). And the first miracle, that of the wedding at Cana, was the beginning of the manifestation of this fullness or glory :-

> "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory (doxa); and his disciples believed in him" (John ii, 11)

"His disciples believed in him" means to say that they believed in his name, or his mission, which was revealed in its seven aspects by the seven "I AM" - sayings quoted above from the Gospel according to John.

Now, the effect of the Triumph over the Temptation in the wilderness was the manifestation of the seven aspects of mastership or "glory" (the seven miracles) and the revelation of the mission or "name" of the Master. And all this was nothing other than the manifestation of the glory of the Father through the Son, and the revelation of the name of the Father through the name of the Son.

But the possibility of the other "glory", i.e. the manifestation of mastership in one's own name, also exists. The words of the Master at the head of this Letter - "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive" (John v, 43) - state it clearly and experience in the domain of Occult,

Esoteric, Hermetic, Cabbalistic, Gnostic, Magical, Martinist, Theosophical, Anthroposophical, Rosicrucian, Templar, Masonic, Sufi, Yogistic movements, and other contemporary spiritual movements, supplies us with ample proof that the words of the Master have in no way lost their actuality, even in the domain of science and in movements of a social, or national, or semi-scientific nature. Because for what other reason do the Theosophists, for example, prefer the Himalayan Mahatmas, whose astral bodies through projection appear from a great distance (or who "precipitate" letters written in blue or red crayon), to the Master, who has never ceased to teach, inspire, illumine and heal, amongst us and near to us — in France, Italy, Germany, Spain, to name only the countries where there have been well-established cases of meetings with him — and who himself said:- "I am with you always, to the end of time" (Matthew xxviii,20)?

For what other reason does one seek a "guru" amongst the Hindu yogis or Tibetan lamas without giving oneself half a chance to seek for a teacher illumined through spiritual experience in our monasteries or spiritual orders, or among lay brothers and sisters who practice the Master's teaching and are perhaps quite near at hand?

And why do members of secret societies or orders of the Masonic type consider the Sacrament of Flesh and Blood of the Lord insufficient for the work of building the new-man, and why do they seek special rituals to supplement it or even to replace it?

Yes, all these questions fall under the heading of the words of the Master: "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me, if another comes in his own name, him you will receive." Why? Because for some the Superman has more attraction than the Son of Man, and because he promises them a career of increasing power, while the Son of Man offers only a career of foot-washing....

Dear Unknown Friend, do not interpret what I am saying in the sense that I am opposed or even hostile to the above-mentioned societies, fraternities, and movements of a spiritual and initiatory nature, nor in the sense that I am accusing them of an anti-Christian attitude. Do not attribute me with a lack of respect for the Mahatmas and gurus of India. It is a matter here only of the <u>purely psychological tendency</u> (that I have been able to observe something of everywhere) which prefers the ideal of the Superman to the ideal of the Son of Man. There is room to add, in order to do justice to the societies and fraternities mentioned, that if this tendency shows up all over the place at the core of these societies and fraternities, it is also so that it is everywhere combatted in a more or less effective way. There is always an opposition to this tendency, although this opposition is sometimes only that of a minority.

Be that as it may, the charioteer of the Arcanum "The Chariot" is the victor over trials, i.e the temptations, and if he is Master, then it is thanks to himself. He is alone, standing in his chariot; no one is present to applaud him or to pay homage to him; he has no weapons — the scepter that he holds not being a weapon. If he is master, his mastership was acquired in solitude and he owes it to the trials alone, and not to anyone or anything external to himself.

The victory achieved in solitude... what glory and what danger it comprises at one

and the same time! It is the only real glory, for it in no way depends on human favor and judgement; it is intrinsic glory - the real radiance of the aura become luminous. It is, however, at the same time the most real and the most serious spiritual danger which exists. "Pride" and "vaingloriousness", the traditional names which one gives to it, do not suffice to characterize it in an adequate way. It is more than this. It is, rather, a kind of mystical megalomania, where one deifies the regulating center of one's own being, one's Ego, and where one sees the divine only within oneself and becomes blind to the divine above and outside of oneself. The "Higher Self" is then experienced as the supreme and unique Self of the world, although it is only higher in relation to the ordinary, empirical self, and it is far from the supreme and unique being.... far from being God, in other words.

It would be as well, now, to dwell on the problem of identification of the self with the higher Self and of the higher Self with God.

C. G. JUNG who, after having explored the sexual or "Freudian" layer, and then that of the will-to-power or "Adlerian" layer, of the Unconscious (i.e. of the occult or latent consciousness) of the human being, encountered a spiritual (mystical, gnostic and magical) layer during the course of his clinical and psychotherapeutic experience. Instead of drawing back from it or extricating himself from it through a corrosive "explanation", he had the courage and honesty to set himself to the laborious study of the phenomenology of this layer of the Unconscious. Now this work proved fruitful. JUNG discovered here not only the causes of certain psychic disorders, but also the profound and intimate process that he designated as the "process of individuation", which is nothing other than the gradual birth of another self (Jung called it the "Self") higher to oneself or one's ordinary Ego. The discovery of the process of the "second birth" prompted him to extend the range of his exploratory work considerably, notably to include symbolism, mystery rituals and the comparative study of contemporary and ancient religions.

Now, this broadening of his field of exploration also proved fruitful. Jung's arrival at his discovery (which at first racked him, preventing him from speaking of it to a living soul for fifteen years) had its train of consequences, including the knowledge and description of some dangers or temptations belonging to the way of initiation and the process of individuation which corresponds to it. One of these dangers — which are at the same time trials or temptations — is that which Jung designated by the term "inflation", which signifies the state of consciousness of the self inflated to excess, and which is known in psychiatry in its extreme manifestation by the term "megalomania".

Therefore, here we are concerned with a range of psychic phenomena, which to begin with show up in relatively innocent forms — such as a high opinion of oneself which is not entirely justified, or the somewhat exaggerated desire to have one's own way — which become quite dangerous when they manifest as a disparaging negativity towards everyone... the faculties of appreciation, gratitude and worship being concentrated upon oneself; and which eventually signify a catastrophe that is rarely curable, when they reveal themselves as

obsession with easily recognizable illusions, or megalomania, pure and simple. Here, then, are the principal dangers of inflation: exaggerated importance attached to oneself, superiority complex tending towards obsession and, lastly, megalomania. The first degree signifies a practical task for work upon oneself; the second degree is a serious trial; while the third is a catastrophe.

What is it a question of in the process of inflation? – Let us look first at what JUNG himself says about it :-

> "The "superordinate personality" is the total man, i.e. man as he really is, not as he appears to himself. To this wholeness the unconscious psyche also belongs, which has its requirements and needs just as consciousness has" (p. 223) – "I usually describe the "superordinate personality" as the "self", thus making a sharp distinction between the ego, which, as is well known, extends only as far as the conscious mind, and the whole of the personality, which includes the unconscious as well as the conscious component. The ego is thus related to the "self" as part to the whole. To that extent the self is superordinate. Moreover, the self is felt empirically not as subject but as object, and this by reason of its unconscious component, which can only come to consciousness indirectly, by way of projection." (C.G. JUNG and C. KERÉNYI, "Introduction to a Science of Mythology"; trsl. R.F.C. Hull, London, 1951, pp. 223-224)

Now, this "way of projection" is living symbolism – traditional symbolism as well as symbolism manifesting itself in dreams, "active imagination" and visions. Dreams, when observed in a series (often running into several hundreds), show that they obey a kind of plan. They seem to relate to one another and to be subject in a profound sense to a common goal ... "... in the deepest sense ... they seem ... to be subordinated to a common

> goal, so that a long dream-series no longer appears as a senseless string of incoherent and isolated happenings, but resembles the successive steps in a planned and orderly process of development. I have called this unconsciousness process spontaneously expressing itself in the symbolism of a long dream-series the individuation process." (C.G. JUNG, "The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche"; trsl. R.F.C. Hull, "The Collected Works of C.G. Jung", vol. 8, London, 1972, pp. 289-290)

The process of individuation is "the spontaneous realization of the whole man" (ibid., p. 292). For the formula that is henceforth valuable for the notion of the soul is: "psyche = ego-consciousness + unconscious" (C.G. Jung, "The Practice of Psychotherapy", trsl. R.F.C. Hull, "The Collected Works of C.G. Jung", vol. 16, London, 1954, p. 90). -- With respect to the role of the unconscious in this formula, it is necessary to take account of the fact, principally, "that in every child consciousness grows out of the unconscious in the course of a

> few years, also that consciousness is always only a temporary state based on an optimum physiological performance and therefore regularly interrupted by phases of unconsciousness (sleep), and finally that the unconscious psyche not only possesses the longer lease of life but is continually present (i.e. it assures the continuity of being)." (ibid. p. 91)

Now, the process of individuation is that of the harmonization of the conscious self and the

unconscious in the psyche. But the "conscious and unconscious do not make a whole when one of them is suppressed and injured by the other." (C.G. Jung, "Conscious, Unconscious and Individuation", trsl. R.F.C. Hull, "The Collected Works of C.G. Jung, vol. 9, part VI, London, 1959, p.288). It is a matter of a harmonization which is only realizable by way of the re-centering of the personality, i.e. the birth of a new center of the personality, which participates in the nature of the unconscious as well as in the conscious self – a center, in other words, where the unconscious is perpetually in transformation into consciousness. This is the aim of the process of "individuation", which is at the same time a stage of initiation.

The process of "individuation" operates, as we have said, by establishing a collaboration between the unconscious and the conscious. The domain of symbols affords such a collaboration and it is here, consequently, that it can begin. In the process of "individuation" one meets – or rather one awakens – the symbol-forces that JUNG designated, in consideration of their typical character, by the name "archetypes" (Archetypen). "The archetype – let us never forget this – is a psychic organ present in all of us. A bad explanation means a correspondingly bad attitude to this organ, which may thus be injured. But the ultimate sufferer is the bad interpreter himself. Hence the "explanation" should always be such that the functional significance of the archetype remains unimpaired, i.e. that an adequate and appropriate relationship between the conscious mind and the archetypes is insured. For the archetype is an element of our psychic structure and thus a vital and necessary component in our psychic economy ..... There is no "rational" substitute for the archetype any more than there is for the cerebellum or the kidneys." (C. G. JUNG and C. KERÉNYI, "Introduction to a Science of Mythology"; trsl. R.F.C. Hull, London, 1951, pp. 109-110)

Now, one must not take archetypes lightly. They are formidable psychic forces which can also invade, inundate and engulf consciousness. This is what happens in the case of the identification of consciousness with the archetype. Then it produces, more often than not, an identification with the role of the heroes (and, sometimes – when it is a matter of the archetype named "the wise old man" or "the great mother" – an identification with a cosmic figure). "At this stage there is usually another identification, this time with the hero, whose role is attractive for a variety of reasons. The identification is often extremely stubborn and dangerous to mental equilibrium. If it can be broken down and consciousness reduced to human proportions, the figure of the hero can gradually be differentiated into a symbol of the self." (ibid., p. 137)

And, let us add, if this does not succeed, the figure of the hero takes possession of consciousness. Then the "second identification" – or the "epiphany of the hero" – takes place.

"The epiphany of the hero (the second identification) shows itself in a corresponding inflation: the colossal pretension grows into a conviction that one is something extraordinary, or else the impossibility of the pretension ever being fulfilled only proves one's own inferiority, which is favorable to the role of the heroic sufferer (a negative inflation). In spite of their contrariety, both forms are identical, because unconscious

compensatory inferiority tallies with conscious megalomania, and unconscious megalomania with conscious inferiority (you never get one without the other). Once the reef of the second identification has been successfully circumnavigated, conscious processes can be cleanly separated from the unconscious, and the latter observed objectively. This leads to the possibility of an accommodation with the unconscious, and thus to a possible synthesis of the conscious and unconscious elements of knowledge and action. This in turn leads to a shifting of the center of personality from the ego to the self." (ibid., pp.137-138)

This is the aim of the process of individuation.

Now, inflation is the principal risk that attends each person who seeks the experience of depth, the experience of what is occult, which lives and works behind the facade of phenomena of ordinary consciousness. Therefore, inflation constitutes the principal danger and trial for occultists, esotericists, magicians, gnostics and mystics. Monasteries and spiritual orders have always known this, thanks to the immense pillar of experience which they have accumulated over millennia in the domain of the profound life. This is why their whole spiritual practice is based on the cultivation of humility by such means as the practice of obedience, the examination of conscience and the reciprocal brotherly help of members of the community. Thus, if SABBATAI ZEVI (1625-1676) had been a member of a spiritual order with a discipline similar to that of Christian spiritual orders and monasteries, his illumination would never have led to his revealing himself (in 1648) to a group of disciples as the promised Messiah. Neither would he have had to become a Turk in order to save his life and continue his mission ("God has made me an Ishmaelite - Turk; he has commanded, and I have obeyed - the ninth day after my second birth", he wrote to his followers in Smyrna). Because he would have been spared positive inflation, just as he would have been spared the negative inflation of which Samuel GANDOR, his disciple, gives the following description:-

"It is said of Sabbatai ZEVI that for fifteen years he has been bowed down by the following affliction: he is pursued by a sense of depression which leaves him no quiet moment and does not even permit him to read, without his being able to say what is the nature of this sadness which has come upon him..." (Gershom G. Scholem, "Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism", London, 1955, p.290)

The history of the illumined Cabbalist Sabbatai ZEVI is only an extreme case of the general dangers and trials which all practicing esotericists have to face. Indeed, Hargrave JENNINGS expresses this danger and trial in a successful way concerning the Rosicrucians:-

"They speak of all mankind as infinitely beneath them; their pride is beyond idea, although they are most humble and quiet in exterior. They glory in poverty, and declare that it is the state ordered for them; and this though they boast universal riches. They decline all human affections, or submit to them as advisable escapes only - appearance of loving obligations, which are assumed for convenient appearance, or for passing in a world which is composed of them, or of their supposal. They mingle

most gracefully in the society of women, with hearts wholly incapable of softness in this direction; while they criticize them with pity or contempt in their own minds as altogether another order of beings from men. They are most simple and deferential in their exterior; and yet the self-value which fills their hearts ceases its self-glorifying expansion only with the boundless skies... In comparison with the Hermetic adepts, monarchs are poor, and their greatest accumulations are contemptible. By the side of the sages, the most learned are mere dolts and blockheads... Thus, towards mankind they are negative; towards everything else, positive; self-contained, self-illuminated, self-everything; but always prepared (nay, enjoined) to do good, wherever possible or safe. To this immeasurable exaltation of themselves, what standard of measure, or what appreciation, can you apply? Ordinary estimates fail in the idea of it. Either the state of these occult philosophers is the height of sublimity, or it is the height of absurdity".... (Hargrave JENNINGS, "The Rosicrucians. Their Rites and Mysteries", London-New York, 1887, pp.30-31)

Let us say absurd as well as sublime, because inflation is always simultaneously sublime and absurd. This is what Eliphas LÉVI ("Dogme et rituel de la haute magie"; trsl. A.E. Waite, "Transcendental Magic. Its Doctrine and Ritual", London, 1968, p.10) says about it :-

"There is also a science which confers on man powers apparently superhuman. They are enumerated thus in a Hebrew manuscript of the XVIth century:

...Aleph - He beholds God face to face, without dying, and converses familiarly with the seven genii who command the entire celestial army.

Beth - He is above all griefs and all fears.

Ghimel - He reigns with all heaven and is served by all hell.

Daleth - He rules his own health and life and can influence equally those of others.

Hé - He can neither be surprised by misfortune nor overwhelmed by disasters, nor can he be conquered by his enemies.

Vav - He knows the reason of the past, present and future.

Zain - He possesses the secret of the resurrection of the dead and the key of immortality.." ... etc.

Is it a matter here of a program or of actual experience? If it is experience, it is one of inflation pushed very far. If it is a program, he who takes its realization seriously cannot fail to fall prey to inflation, be it positive (superiority complex) or negative (inferiority complex).

Whatever it may be, the experience or program of this Hebrew manuscript of the XVIth century quoted by Eliphas LÉVI shows a remarkable similarity to the experience of John CUSTANCE, described by him in his book "Wisdom, Madness and Folly: the Philosophy of a Lunatic" (London, 1951, p.51). It is as follows:- "I feel so close to God, so inspired by His Spirit that in a sense I am God. I see the future, plan the Universe, save mankind; I am utterly and completely immortal; I am even male and female. The whole Universe, animate and inanimate, past, present and future, is within me. All nature and life, all spirits, are cooperating and connected with me; all things are possible. I am in a sense

identical with all spirits from God to Satan. I reconcile Good and Evil and create light, darkness, worlds, universes..."

The state described by John Custance is characteristic of that of acute mania, and the author himself in no way denies it. But would he still look at it in this way, one can ask, if he knew that his experience is found described exactly in the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, which says:

"He who has found and awakened to the Soul that has entered this conglomerate whole – he is the maker of everything, for he is the creator of all; the world is his: indeed, he is the world itself." (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.13; trsl. R. Hume, "The Thirteen Principal Upanishads", Oxford, 1962, p. 142)

Can one say with certainty that this text quoted from the Upanishads is based on an entirely different experience to that of John Custance?

Thirty-eight years ago I knew a tranquil man of mature age who taught English at the YMCA in the capital of a Baltic country. Now, he revealed to me one day that he had attained a spiritual state which manifests itself through "the eternal gaze" and which is that of consciousness of the identity of Self with the Eternal Reality of the world. The past, present and future – seen from the pedestal of eternity, where his consciousness had its abode – were an open book for him. He had no more problems, not because he had resolved them, but because he had attained the state of consciousness where they disappeared, having become of no importance. Because problems belong to the domain of motion in time and space; he who transcends this and arrives at the realm of eternity and infinity, where there is neither movement nor change, is free of problems.

When he spoke to me of these things, his beautiful blue eyes rayed out sincerity and certainty. But this radiance gave way to a dark and angry look as soon as I raised the question of the value of the "subjective feeling of eternity" when one is not aware of or one is unable objectively to do something more towards helping humanity, be it in spiritual (or other) progress, or in the alleviation of spiritual, psychic and bodily suffering. He did not forgive me this question and he turned his back on me, which was my last impression of him in this world (he made his way to India, where soon after he died as victim of an epidemic).

I recount this episode in my life only so that you may know, dear Unknown Friend, when and how the very serious problem of the forms of, and the dangers of, spiritual megalomania were awakened in me, and how I owe it to this objective experience that I began work on this problem, some of the outcomes of which I am in the process of showing.

Spiritual megalomania is as old as the world. Its origin is found well beyond the terrestrial world, according to the millennial-old tradition concerning the fall of Lucifer.

The prophet Ezekiel gives a most moving description of this:

"You were the signet of perfection,
You were full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.
You were in Eden, the garden of God;
You were covered with every kind of precious stone.
Sardonyx, topaz, and diamond,
Chrysolite, onyx, and jasper,
Sapphire, carbuncle, emerald, and gold,
With which you were adorned, and which were prepared for you on the day that you were created.
You were a guardian Cherubim, with outspread wings;
I placed you, and you were, on the holy mountain of God;
You walked in the midst of the stones of fire .....
Your heart was proud because of your beauty,
You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.
I cast you to the ground,
I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you...." (Ezekiel xxviii, 12-17)

Here is the higher (i.e. celestial) origin of inflation, superiority complex and megalomania. And since "that which is below is as that which is above", it is repeated below in human earthly life from century to century and generation to generation. It is repeated above all in the lives of those human beings who are detached from the ordinary earthly setting and the state of consciousness belonging to it, and who transcend it, be it in the sense of height, in the sense of breadth, or, lastly, in the sense of depth. He who aspires to a plane <u>higher</u> than that of the terrestrial setting risks becoming haughty; he who seeks <u>breadth</u> beyond the normal circle of earthly duties and pleasures risks considering himself to be more and more important; he who is in search of the <u>depth</u> beneath the surface of the phenomena of terrestrial life, runs the greatest risk: that of inflation, of which C.G. JUNG speaks.

The abstract metaphysician, who arranges worlds according to an order that he has chosen, can lose all interest for the particular and for the individual, in such a way that he comes to consider human beings to be almost as insignificant as insects. He regards them only from above. Seen from his metaphysical height, they lose all proportion and become for him small or almost insignificant – while, he, the metaphysician, is great, since he participates in great metaphysical things, which clothe him in grandeur.

The reformer who <u>wants</u> to correct or to save humanity easily falls victim to the temptation of considering himself as the active center of passive circle of humanity. He feels himself as the bearer of a mission of universal significance; therefore he feels himself to be more and more important.

The practicing occultist, esotericist or Hermeticist (if he is not practicing he is only a metaphysician or reformer) experiences the higher forces which work beyond his consciousness and which make their entrance there. At what price? -- Either at the price of worshipping on his knees — or otherwise at the price of the identification of self with these higher forces, which results in megalomania.

One speaks often of the dangers of occultism. Black magic is usually the supreme danger against which the beginner is put on guard by the "masters"; others (above all those who know more or less about medicine) see it as disorders of the nervous system.

But experience during 43 years of practical occultism (or esotericism) has taught me that the danger of occultism is neither black magic nor nervous disorder — at least, these dangers are met no more often amongst occultists than amongst politicians, artists, psychologists, believers and agnostics. I am not able to cite by name any black magician amongst the occultists that I know, whereas it would not be too difficult to name some politicians who, for example, have nothing to do with occultism — and would even be hostile to it — but whose impact and influence agree very well with the classical concept of that of the "black magician". Indeed, is it difficult to name politicians who have exercised a deadly, suggestive influence on the popular masses, blinding them and inciting them to acts of cruelty, injustice and violence, of which each individual, taken separately, would be incapable? And who, through their semi-magical influence, have deprived individuals of their freedom and rendered them possessed? And — is not this action to deprive men of their moral freedom and to render them possessed the aim and very essence of black magic?

No, dear Unknown Friend, occultists — including those amongst them who practice ceremonial magic — are neither masters nor disciples of black magic. Truth to tell, they are amongst those who have least of all in common with it. It is true that they — above all the adepts of ceremonial magic — often fall prey to illusions and mislead themselves and others, but is this black magic? Besides, where can one find a class of human beings who never make mistakes? Even Doctor Faust — who made a pact with the devil (and this concerns all "pact-makers" of this kind, ancient and modern) — was only the naive victim of a prank on the part of Mephistopheles (who is a rogue well-known to all those who have knowledge of the "occult world"), because how can you "sell" something which in no way belongs to you!? It is his soul which would have been able to sell Doctor Faust, but never would Doctor Faust be able to give away his soul, however solemn his pact was and no matter whether he wrote and signed with blood or with ordinary ink.

It is Mephistopheles' way of giving a lesson to those who want to be supermen; he brings to light the puerility of their pretensions. And while wholly deploring the naivety of poor Doctor Faust, one is led to consider the "method of roguishness" of Mephistopheles as, in the last analysis, salutary. Because what Mephistopheles does (and other examples of this method of a more recent date could be cited) is to show the ridiculousness and absurdity of the aspirations

and pretensions of so-called "supermen". "Von allern Geistern, die verneinen,
Ist mir der Schalk am wenigsten zur Last" ("Of all Spirits who deny, the rogue is the least burden to me") says God concerning Mephistopheles in Goethe's "Faust" ("Prologue in Heaven", Faust, part I).

Let us therefore not condemn the rogue of the spiritual world, and above all let us not be afraid of him. Nor let us condemn Doctor Faust, our brother, by accusing him of black magic – it is, rather, childish credulity of which he can be accused, if he must be accused. In any case, he was one hundred times more innocent with respect to mankind than our contemporaries who have invented the nuclear bomb ... as good scientists and citizens.

No, neither black magic nor nervous disorders constitute the special dangers of occultism. Its principal danger – of which, however, it has no monopoly – is designated by the three terms: superiority complex, inflation, megalomania.

In fact, an occultist (who is not a beginner) who has not attained this moral illness, or who has not at some time in the past undergone it, is rare. The tendency to megalomania shows up all over the place among occultists. Decades of personal relationships, as well as reading occult literature, have taught me this. There are many levels of this moral defect. It manifests itself at first as self-assurance and a certain informality with which one speaks of higher and sacred things. Then it expresses itself as "knowing better" and "knowing all", i.e. as the attitude of a master towards everyone. Lastly, it manifests as implicit or even explicit infallibility.

I do not want to cite passages from occult literature, nor to name names, nor to mention biographical facts concerning known occultists, in order to prove or illustrate this diagnosis. It would not be difficult for you, dear Unknown Friend, to find them yourself in abundance. What my intention is here is to refute the false accusations concerning occultism, on the one hand, and on the other hand to show up the real danger that occultism presents – so that one is put on guard against it.

But what should one do against this danger, in order to guard one's moral well-being?

The ancient saying "O r a et l a b o r a" ("pray and work") constitutes the only answer that I have been able to find. Worship and work constitute the only curative as well as prophylactic remedy that I know against megalomaniacal illusions. It is necessary to worship what is above us and it is necessary to participate in human effort in the domain of objective facts in order to be able to hold in check the illusions concerning what one is and what one is capable of. For whoever is aware of raising his prayer and meditation to the level of pure worship will always be conscious of the distance which separates (and at the same time unites) the worshipper and the worshipped. Therefore he will not be tempted to worship himself, which is in the last analysis the cause of megalomania. He will always have in sight the difference between himself and the worshipped. He will not confuse what he is with what the worshipped being is.

On the other hand, he who works, i.e. who takes part in human effort, with a view to objective and verifiable results, will not easily fall prey to illusion with respect to what

he is capable of. Thus, for example, a practicing doctor inclined to overestimate his power of healing will soon learn to know the real limits of his ability through experience of his failures.

Jacob BOEHME was a shoemaker, and was illumined. When he had had the experience of illumination (.." .. ist mir die Pforte eröffnet worden, dass ich in einer Viertelstunde mehr gesehen und gewusst habe, als wenn ich wäre viel Jahr auf hohen Schulen gewesen..."... " .. the Door became opened to me, so that in a quarter of an hour I observed and knew more than if I had attended a university for many years..." he wrote in a letter to the tax collector Lindner), where he "recognized the Being of Beings, the firmament and the abyss" ("Denn ich sah und erkannte das Wesen aller Wesen, den Grund und Ungrund" - same letter), he in no way concluded from it that he, in so far as he was a shoemaker, could henceforth do more than his colleagues in the trade, or that he himself could do more than before his illumination. On the other hand, through his illumination he learned to know the greatness of God and the world (.." .. dessen ich mich hoch verwunderte, wusste nicht wie mir geschah, und darüber mein Herz ins Lob Gottes wendete." ".. of which I was highly astounded, without knowing how it happened to me, and thereupon my heart turned to praise of God" - same letter) and this filled him with worship ("thereupon my heart turned to praise of God").

Therefore, it was the work of his trade and the worship of God which protected the moral well-being of Jacob Boehme. And I allow myself to add here that my experience in the domain of esotericism has taught me that what was salutary in Boehme's case is also so, without exception, regarding all those who aspire to supersensible experiences.

Worship and work - "O r a et l a b o r a" -- therefore constitute the "conditio sine qua non" for practical esotericism in order to hold in check the tendency towards megalomania. This is in order to hold it in check, yet in order to obtain immunity from this moral illness, more than this is necessary. One has to have the real experience of concretely meeting a being higher than oneself. I mean by "concretely meeting" neither the feeling of "higher Self", nor the more or less vague feeling of the "presence of a higher entity", nor even the experience of a "flood of inspiration" which fills one with life and light - no, what I mean by "concretely meeting" is nothing other than a true and really concrete meeting, i.e. face to face. It can be spiritual - face to face in vision - or more physically concrete. Thus, St. Teresa of Avila (in order to cite only one of many known examples) met the Master, conversed with Him, asked and received from Him advice and instruction on an objective spiritual plane (yes, spirituality is not exclusively subjective - it can also be objective). And certainly PAPUS and his group of occultist friends met Monsieur Philip of LYONS on the physical plane. Here are two examples of the concrete meeting that I mean.

Now, he who has had the experience of a concrete meeting with a higher being (a saint or righteous individual, an angel or another hierarchical being, the Virgin Mary,

the Master...) becomes through this very fact immune with respect to the tendency towards megalomania. The experience of having been face to face with a Great One necessarily comprises complete healing and immunity from any tendency towards megalomania. No human being who has seen and heard will be able to make an idol of himself. More than this: the true and ultimate criterion for the reality of these so-called "visionary" experiences, i.e. with respect to their authenticity or falsity, is given in the moral effect of these experiences, notably whether they make the recipient more humble or more pretentious. The experience of her meetings with the Master made St. TERESA more and more humble. The experience on the terrestrial plane of the meeting with Monsieur PHILIP also made PAPUS and his occultist friends more humble. Now, these two experiences — quite different though they are with respect to subject and object — were authentic. Neither Papus was thereby mistaken about the spiritual greatness of he who he recognized as his "spiritual master", nor was St. Teresa any less mistaken about the reality of the Master, whom she saw and heard speak.

Dear Unknown Friend, read the Bible and you will find there a great number of examples of this law, which may be expressed as follows: - authentic experience of the Divine makes one humble; he who is not humble has not had authentic experience of the Divine. Take the apostles who "saw and heard" the Master and the prophets who "saw and heard" the God of Israel — you will not find among them any trace of tendencies towards "pride" such as you can certainly find among many gnostic teachers who (consequently) had not "seen and heard".

But if it is true that it is necessary to have "seen and heard" in order to thoroughly learn the lesson of humility, what is there to say about people who are "naturally" humble and who have not "seen and heard"?

Without prejudice to other good and valuable answers, the answer which seems right to me is that all those who are humble have certainly seen and heard — no matter where or when, and no matter whether they remember or not. Humility can be the result of the real (i.e. non-intellectual) memory of the soul of the spiritual experience prior to birth, or it can be due to memory of nocturnal experience undergone during sleep and which remains in the domain of the unconscious or, lastly, it can be the effect of experience that is present consciously or unconsciously but is unacknowledged by oneself or others. For humility, like charity, is not a natural quality of human nature. Its origins can in no way be found in the domain of natural evolution, since it is not possible to conceive of it as the fruit of the "struggle for existence", i.e. natural selection and the survival of the fittest at the expense of the weak. Because the school of the struggle for existence does not produce humble people; it produces only strugglers and fighters of every kind. Humility is therefore a quality which must be due to the action of G r a c e, i.e. it must be a gift from above. Now, the "concrete meetings, face to face" of which it is a question here are always, without exception, events due to Grace, being meetings where a higher

being voluntarily draws near to a lower being. The meeting which made SAUL, the Pharisee, into PAUL, the Apostle, was not due to his efforts; it was an act of the One whom he met. It is the same with all meetings "face to face" with higher beings. Our part is only "to seek", "to knock" and "to pray", but the decisive act comes from above.

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Let us now return to the Arcanum "The Chariot", whose traditional meaning is "victory, triumph, success".

"This meaning -- says J. MAXWELL ("Le Tarot", Paris, 1933, p.87) - is derived naturally from the bearing of the personage (the charioteer), and presents no difficulty". Now, there is all the same a difficulty that it presents, namely that of answering the question: Does this card signify a warning or an ideal, or rather both at once?

I am inclined to see in all the Arcana of the Tarot simultaneously both warnings and aims to be attained - at least, this is what I have learned through forty years of study and meditation on the Tarot.

Thus "the Magician" is a warning against the intellectual jugglery of the metaphysician, heedless of experience, and against charlatancy of every kind - and at the same time it teaches "concentration without effort" and the use of the method of analogy.

"The Papesse" warns us of the dangers of gnosticism in teaching the discipline of true Gnosis.

"The Empress" evokes the dangers of mediumship and magic in revealing to us the mysteries of Sacred Magic.

"The Emperor" warns us of the will-to-power and teaches us the power of the Cross.

"The Pope" confronts us with the humanistic cult of personality and the magical pentagram in which this culminates, and opposes to this Holy Poverty, Obedience to the Divine, and the Magic of the Five Wounds.

"The Lover" warns us of the three temptations and teaches us the three sacred vows.

"The Chariot", lastly, warns us of the danger of megalomania and <u>teaches us the real triumph</u> achieved by the Self.

The real Triumph achieved by the Self. This means to say the successful outcome of the "process of individuation", according to C.G. JUNG, or the successful outcome of the work of true liberation, which is the fruit of c a t h a r s i s or purification and which precedes p h o t i s m o s or illumination, and which is followed by h e n o s i s or union, according to the occidental initiation tradition.

The "triumpher" on the Chariot can therefore signify either a sick person

suffering from megalomania or a man who has passed through catharsis or purification, the first of the three stages on the way of Initiation.

The thesis that I am advancing here is this: that, just as with all the other cards of the Arcana of the Tarot, the card of arcanum VII also expresses a double meaning. The personage on card VII signifies at one and the same time the "triumpher" and the Triumpher, the megalomaniac and the integrated man, master of himself.

The integrated man, master of himself, conqueror in all trials – who is he?

It is he who holds in check the four temptations – i.e. the three temptations in the wilderness described in the Gospels as well as the temptation which synthesizes them: the temptation of "pride", the center of the triangle of temptations – and who is, therefore, master of the four elements which compose the vehicle of his being: fire, air, water and earth. Master of the four elements – that is to say: creative being in clear, fluid and precise thought; creativity, clarity, fluidity and precision being the manifestations of the four elements in the domain of thought. It means to say, moreover, that he has a warm, large, tender and faithful heart – warmth, magnanimity, sensitivity and faithfulness being the manifestations of the four elements in the domain of feeling. There is, lastly, to add that he has ardor ("man of desire"), fullness, flexibility and stability in his will where the four elements manifest themselves as intensity, scope, adaptability and firmness. To summarize, one can say that a master of the four elements is a man of initiative, who is serene, mobile and firm. He represents the four natural virtues of Catholic theology – prudence, strength, temperance and justice; or rather Plato's four cardinal virtues – wisdom, courage, temperance and justice; or yet again the four qualities of SANKARACHARYA – viveka (discernment), vairagya (serenity), the "six jewels" of just conduct, and the desire for deliverance. Whatever the formulation may be of the four virtues in question, it is always a matter of the four elements or projections of the sacred name: יהוה – the Tetragrammaton, in human nature.

The four columns supporting the canopy on the chariot drawn by two horses, in the card of Arcanum VII, therefore signify the Four elements taken in a vertical sense, i.e. in their analogous meaning through the three worlds – the spiritual world, the soul world and the physical world.

And what is signified by the canopy itself that the four columns support?

The function of a canopy, taken as a material object, is to protect the person who is found beneath it. It therefore serves as a roof. Taken in its spiritual sense, at which one arrives by way of analogy, the canopy above the man wearing a yellow royal crown expresses two contrary things: that the crowned man is a megalomaniac in the condition of

"splendid isolation", separated from Heaven by the canopy, or else that the crowned man is an initiate in the mystery of spiritual well-being and that he does not identify himself with Heaven, being conscious of the difference which exists between himself and that which is above him. In other words, the canopy indicates the facts and truths underlying humility as well as megalomania. Humility, being the law of spiritual health, implies consciousness of the difference and distance between the center of human consciousness and the center of divine consciousness. He has a "skin" — or a canopy, if you wish — in his consciousness (just as the human body has a skin), which separates the human from the Divine, at the same time uniting them. This "spiritual skin" protects the spiritual well-being of man by not allowing him to identify himself ontologically with God, or to say "I am God" (cf. Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10: "aham brahmasmi" = "I am Brahma"), but at the same time allowing him the relationship of breathing, coming together and separating (which is never alienation!), which together constitute the life of love. The life of love consists of coming together and separating always with the consciousness present of non-identity: this is analogous to the process of breathing which consists of inhalation and exhalation. Is this not found expressed in an unparalleled way in the extract from Psalm 43, which is the sixth phrase in the Mass: "Emitte lucem tuam, et veritatem tuam: ipsa me deduxerunt, et adduxerunt in montem sanctum tuum, et in tabernacula tua"? ("Oh send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me to thy holy hill and to thy tabernacles"). Yes, the light of your presence (drawing near) and the truth that I receive in me — through reflection (separating), this leads us towards the tabernacles.

Tabernacles... are these not tents, baldachins, canopies under which man is united in love with the Divine, without identifying himself with it or being absorbed by it? Aren't these tabernacles made of the "skin of humility", which alone protects us against the danger of killing love through ontological identification, i.e. the identification of the human being with divine being ("this soul is God" - "ayam atma brahma", Mandukya Upanishad, 2; "consciousness is God" - "pragnanam brahma", Aitareya Upanishad, 5.3) — and therefore protects us from the danger of spiritual megalomania (i.e. from arrogating to ourselves the very being of God instead of his image?

There are three forms of mystical experience: the experience of union with Nature, that of union with the transcendental human Self, and that of union with God. The first kind of experience is that of the obliteration of the differentiation between the individual's psychic life and surrounding Nature. It is this which Lévy-BRUHL calls "mystical participation", which notion he coined while studying the psychology of primitive peoples. This

notion designates the state of consciousness where the separation between the conscious subject and the object of the outside world disappears, and where subject and object become one. This kind of experience underlies not only shamanism and the totemism of the primitives but also the so-called "mythogenous" consciousness, which is the source of natural myths, as well as the ardent desire of poets and philosophers for union with Nature (e.g. Empedocles threw himself into the crater of the volcano on Mount Etna in order to unite himself with the elements of Nature). The effect of peyote, mescalin, hashish, alcohol, etc., can sometimes (but not always, and not with everyone!) produces states of consciousness analogous to that of "mystical participation". The characteristic trait of this form of experience is i n t o x i c a t i o n, i.e. the temporary fusion of oneself with forces exterior to one's self-consciousness. The Dionysian o r g i e s of antiquity were based on the experience of "sacred intoxication" due to the obliteration of the differentiation between self and non-self.

The second form of mystical experience is that of the transcendental Self. It consists in separating the ordinary empirical self from the higher Self, which is above all motion and all that which belongs to the domain of space and time. The higher Self is therefore experienced as immortal and free.

If "Nature mysticism" is characterized by intoxication, that of the Self, in contrast, has the characteristic trait of "progressively coming to one's senses", with the aim of complete sobriety. A philosophy based on the mystical experience of the Self, which represents it in the purest way and is least distorted by the addition of hazardous intellectual speculations, is that of the Indian school of Sankya. There the individual purusha is experienced in its separation from prakriti (i.e. all movement, space and time) as immortal and free. Although the same experience is found at the basis of the Vedanta philosophy, its followers are not satisfied with the immediate experience which which teaches nothing more, and nothing less, than that the true Self of man is immortal and free, but they add the postulate that the higher Self is God ("ayam atma brahma" – "this soul is God", Mandukya Upanishad, 2). The Sankya philosophy, in contrast, remains within the limits of the experience of the higher Self as such and in no way denies the plurality of purushas (i.e. the plurality of immortal and free higher Egos), nor does it raise the individual purusha to the dignity of the Absolute – which has resulted in it being considered an atheistic philosophy. It is so, if one understands by "atheist" the frank confession: I have not had experience of anything higher than the immortal and free Ego; abiding by the experience, what can I say in good faith? Sankya is not a religion and therefore does not merit being classed as "atheistic" any more than, for example, the modern psychological school of Jung does. On the other hand, can it be considered as proof of belief in God to

attribute to the higher Self of man the dignity of the Absolute?

The third sort of mystical* experience is that of the living God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the God of St. Augustine, St. Francis, St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross in the Christian tradition, the God of the Bhagavad-Gita, Ramanuja, Madhva and Caitanya in the Hindu tradition. Here it is a matter of union with God in love, which implies a substantial duality being essentially at one.

This experience has as its principal characteristic trait the synthesis of the intoxication of Nature mysticism and the sobriety of mysticism of the higher Self. The term coined by tradition to express the state where ardent enthusiasm and profound peace manifest themselves simultaneously is that of "beatitude" or "beatific vision" (beatitudo, visio beatifica). Beatific vision implies the duality of the seer and the seen, on the one hand, and their union or intrinsic oneness in love, on the other hand. This is why this term expresses in a wonderfully clear and precise way the essence of theistic mystical experience: the meeting of the soul with God, face to face, in love. And this experience is all the more elevated the more complete the differentiation is, and the more perfect the union is. For this reason the Holy Cabbala puts at the center of spiritual experience that of the Holy Face (A r i c h - A n p h i n) of the Ancient of Days, and this is also why it teaches that the supreme experience of the human being – as well as the highest form of death for a mortal – is attained when God embraces (embrasse) the human soul.

> "And when Abraham our father gazed, he looked, saw, delved, understood, engraved, carved, permuted and depicted, and he was successful. And the Master of all ('a d o n h a k o l), Blessed be He, revealed Himself to him, and took him in His bosom, kissed (embrassa) him on the head, and called him, "My beloved"..." ("Sefer Yetzirah The Book of Creation: in theory and practice", vi,4, the short version; trsl. Aryeh Kaplan, York Beach, 1990, p.267)

says the S E P H E R Y e t z i r a h. And St. John of the Cross spoke of his experiences of the divine Presence in the tabernacles of love only in the language of love.

The three forms of mystical experience have their hygienic laws, or their "tabernacles" or "skins". They fall under the law of temperance or measure. Otherwise the rage of acute mania, megalomania and complete alienation from the world (ἰδιοτία) menace, respectively, their adepts. The breast-plate, the canopy and the crown are the three symbols for the salutary measures pertaining to the domains of experience of Nature mysticism, human mysticism and divine mysticism.

Now, the "triumpher" of Arcanum VII wears a breast-plate, stands under a canopy and is crowned. This is why he does not lose himself in Nature, why he does not lose God in the experience of his higher Self and why he does not lose the world in experiencing the love of

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* The term "mystical" used here comprises mystical experience proper and gnostic experience, as united.

God. He holds in check the dangers of rage, megalomania and exaltation. He is sane.

The "triumpher" of Arcanum VII is the true adept of Hermeticism, i.e. an adept of mysticism, gnosis and magic – divine, human and natural. He is not running; he stands upright. He is not seated, deep in meditation; he holds a scepter which serves him to bridle the two horses, one blue and one red, which draw his chariot. He is not absent, plunged into exalted ecstasy; he is on his way and he goes forward, standing upright all the while in his vehicle. The two horses, the one blue and the other red, have relieved him of the effort of walking. The instinctive forces of "yes" and "no", attraction and repulsion, arterial blood and venous blood, trust and mistrust, faith and doubt, life and death and, lastly, "right" and "left" – symbolized by the pillars of J a c h i n and B o a z – have become motive forces in him, obedient to his scepter. They serve him voluntarily as he is their true master. He trusts them and they trust him – this is mastership according to Hermeticism. For in Hermeticism mastership does not signify the subjugation of the lower by the higher, but rather the alliance of superconsciousness, consciousness and instinctive – or sub-consciousness. This is the Hermetic ideal of p e a c e in the microcosm – the prototype of peace within a humanity divided into races, nations, classes and beliefs.

This peace is equilibrium or justice, where each particular force playing its part in the life of the microcosm is assigned its rightful place in the life of the entire psychic and physical organism.

Now, equilibrium or justice is the subject of the following arcanum, of Arcanum VIII, "J u s t i c e", which will be the theme of the next Letter.

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Summarizing the p r a c t i c a l teaching (for it is always the practical aspect which occupies us in the first place) of the seventh Arcanum of the Tarot, one can say that the "triumpher" is a "convalescent", i.e. that the "triumpher" has triumphed over sickness or imbalance – spiritual, psychic and physical – which means to say that he is at the same time "righteous" or the one who has triumphed over the four temptations by remaining faithful to the three sacred vows as well as to their root and synthesis: humility. In turn, this means to say that he is a "liberated man" or "master". He is free of astrological "planetary" influences – rediscovered in our time by C.G. JUNG in the guise of the "collective unconscious" with its (seven!) principal psychic forces or "archetypes". He is master of the "archetypes" (astrological "planetary influences", or "archontes" of the ancient gnostics), i.e. the "shadow", the "persona", the "animus", the "anima", the "wise old man" or "father", the "mother" and even the "self", above which is the "self of selves" or God. – In other words, he holds in check the influences, in so far as they are baleful, of the Moon, Mercury, Mars, Venus, Jupiter,

Saturn and even the Sun, above which he knows there exists the "Sun of Suns" or God. He is not <u>without</u> the planets, archetypes or archontes (just as he is not without earth, water, air and fire) for these are what comprise that which is called the "astral body" (or psychic body) in occultism. The psychic body is a body in so far as it is composed of unconscious, collective or "planetary" psychic forces. It is the astrological planets (or Jung's archetypes) which form the "stuff" of the psychic or astral body. The "triumpher" of the seventh Arcanum is therefore the master of the astral body.

Master of the astral body. Master of the <u>seven</u> forces which it comprises, holding them in equilibrium.

What is the eighth force which puts the seven forces of the astral body in equilibrium?

It is the eighth Arcanum of the Tarot, "<u>Justice</u>", which gives the answer to this question.

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